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Sarah Fahim

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**The Influence of Advertising on Gender Roles and Stereotypes in
Pakistan**

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Wei-Na Lee, Supervisor

Wan-Hsiu Sunny Tsai

Influence of Advertising on Gender Roles and Stereotypes in Pakistan

by

Sarah Fahim

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Dedication

To Ammi, Baba and Sami.

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Humbled by the fact that Dr. Lee considered my request to supervise my thesis, despite her extremely occupied academic year. Dr. Tsai has been extremely kind to have read and offered valuable feedback and insight. Not half of this journey would have been possible without this supervision and leadership.

Abstract

Influence of Advertising on Gender Roles and Stereotypes in Pakistan

Sarah Fahim, M.A.

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Supervisor: Wei-Na Lee

In a region where the world's largest mass displacement took place in 1947, socio-political and religious influencers have been long-established drivers of societal evolution. On a historic backdrop, gender roles and stereotypes are embedded in culture and religions of the sub-continent. This research study investigates gender roles and stereotypes in modern-day Pakistan, which was created in 1947 as a result of the partition of British India. Inspiration for this thesis is drawn from personal life experiences and the complex evolution of gender roles in the country. Gender roles are studied in relation with advertising in this study. Whether or not advertising reframes and influences gender roles in the minds of the Pakistani consumers will be investigated through in-depth, qualitative interviews.

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CHAPTER 1: *INTRODUCTION*

BACKGROUND: RESEARCH INTEREST & TOPIC OF THE THESIS

Equal gender rights and gender roles are prevalent debates around the world today. The role and representation of women, to be specific, regardless of whether the context is of a first world country or third world, have been receiving considerable attention from people of diverse backgrounds: politicians, policymakers, world leaders, artists, writers, actors are to name a few.

I spent most years of my life in a third world, South Asian country, where needs of the hour include education, political reform, corruption mitigation, and preventing the societal and economic growth from being relinquished by the religious police are among the most critical socio-political issues. Women's unequal representation on several fronts in the culture, economy and society gets overshadowed, keeping social dilemmas like domestic abuse and marital rape at large. The root cause of these issues is buried under years of unequal power distribution and political history influenced by religion in the region, nurturing restrictive gender roles and stereotypes defined for women generally living in the pre 1947 partitioned sub-continent, and specifically in the Pakistani society.

Being a woman myself, I have a natural bias and interest toward these issues. It wasn't until I started studying social sciences and pursued a career in communications and

advertising that I was able to see gender stereotypes in light of moral correctness. I had always perceived them as a way of life, defined by time, religion and society over the years in people's best interest. I grew more curious as I started to write copy for advertisements for airline, cooking oil, snack, detergent and many other brands. A woman would always be seen inside the kitchen, savoring the delicious smell of food that she cooks in the crisp, golden cooking oil. These stereotypes influenced my writing and ideas. Rarely ever a man would be washing clothes beside her wife, or a woman making financial decisions for the family in a lead household role instead of a man.

While history and religion on all cultural fronts, including ads, dictated these gender roles, social media brought global awareness into the Pakistani society during 2005 which grew into full momentum by 2011. The US-consul general, in his article 'Pakistan's Social Media Revolution', published in The Express Tribune in June 2011, shared astounding estimates – twenty million Pakistanis were regularly online at the time, which equals four times the population of Singapore. Per capita internet access in Pakistan was 10-15% of the entire population. The first ever international social media summit in Pakistan was held in the metropolitan hub of the country, Karachi, in June 2011, which welcomed international partners, audience and collaborators, especially from journalism and online blogging communities. Considering this boost in access to information via the internet, and increasing social media integration in society, reform on several fronts in Pakistan was evident and speedy. The past decade in particular seems to have reframed the social construct of gender roles and stereotypes in the Pakistani society. Women's representation

in the workforce has significantly increased, validated through opinions and perceptions reflected in the respondents' interviews included later in this research study.

Given this background, this study will investigate if advertising has reframed common perception of people in the Pakistani society about gender roles and stereotypes. Reframing can be defined as framing or expressing a concept, word or idea differently, or in a new way altogether. Whereas, stereotypes are inaccurate representations of beliefs and behaviors of a culture, whereas gender stereotypes concern inaccurate representations about social hierarchy and gender roles in a social system.

To test this, a qualitative research methodology was found best suited for the purposes of this research study. A qualitative methodology offers room for probing responses during in-depth interviews. A complex social construct that gender roles are, and considering the highly varying opinions that respondents may have, flexibility in the research methodology is essential to this research. Moreover, a traditional quantitative method, like a survey could have been chosen, but the objectives of this investigation would have required a rather longer study set-up, potentially resulting in a fatigue effect in respondents, which could have skewed the responses. Considering this probable barrier to fully understanding people's perception, a qualitative method was chosen. To this concept of reframed gender roles and stereotypes and their relationship with advertising, there are several different layers that can be examined through a social science lens. Following research questions outline a few focused aspects of this concept. These research questions

will guide the development of research methodology, discussion guide and final conclusions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first research question is the broader purpose of this thesis: to look into the relationship between gender roles and advertising in Pakistan. The latter three questions cover more granular aspects. Reframing of gender roles and macro factors influencing them are posed as the second research question. Consumers' perception of gender roles and whether they attribute it to advertising in any way will be investigated in the next question. Finally, the last question will be examined from advertising practitioners' point of view to further look into what account planners, as the first people to frame communications' messaging strategies, believe their role to be in influencing culture, gender roles and stereotypes.

- Does advertising influence gender roles in Pakistan?
 - a) What are the factors that define gender roles and stereotypes in the Pakistani society?
 - b) Can gender roles be modified or re-framed through advertising in Pakistan?
 - c) Do consumers agree that advertising has reframed their perception of gender roles?

- d) What do advertising practitioners believe their role to be in this reframing process?

DETAILS OF CHAPTERS

To answer these research questions, the background and literature review, informal content analysis of advertisements in Pakistan from the previous decade, research methodology and technique, findings, discussion of findings, a summary of the thesis, its limitations and suggestions for future research into this area have been organized into separate chapters. Each chapter focuses on specific components as described briefly below.

Chapter 2, Literature Review, will take a deep dive into multiple facets of history, culture and politics that have influenced present-day gender roles' and their relationship with advertising in Pakistan. Considering the history of Pakistan being part of India, and the British reform resulting in Pakistan's creation, both politics and history play a crucial role in how societal and cultural constructs are defined in Pakistan in 2018. The literature review also focuses on the history of advertising and early development of mass media in the young country. It draws from books, expert perspectives and published works of veterans and practitioners who initiated, nurtured and sustained the mass communication and advertising industries. A section on issues, facts and realities of South Asian women

in Pakistan has also been included. That particular section also provides an outlook on the connection of religious values and women's roles in the society.

An informal content analysis will also be presented in this chapter, reviewing advertising works from a gender oriented lens. A few references from existing literature and research on Pakistani advertisements, and a review of relatively more recent advertisement examples will be used to provide a view of present day gender roles' depiction in advertisements and their relationship with society and culture.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and research techniques used in this study. Specific details such as respondents' recruitment criteria, outcome-driven questions, topical sections of the interview, and priorities behind moderating the interviews are described in this section. It also explains why respondents were grouped into particular categories when they were recruited and interviewed. The number of respondents, their allocation to particular groups of respondents, the structure of the interview manuscripts and steps taken after every interview before consolidating overarching themes will also be included in this chapter.

Chapter 4, Findings, includes major themes and insights from the interviews that were observed in the responses. These themes were gathered based on evident similarities and differences in responses based on how the respondents were grouped. Gender and profession were considered as basis for grouping respondents, explained further in chapter

3. The findings' chapter is organized into three main themes that were observed in the interviews, and sub-themes further elicit the findings under each of the three major ones.

The first theme focuses on prominent cultural values that stood out in consumers' and practitioners' responses. Each cultural value has been presented as a sub-theme of this section. The second theme represents respondents' views on women's role in the society, their representation in the national workforce and its impact on society. Each factor influencing this theme has been presented as a sub-theme of this section. The third and final theme presents a comparison of gender role-related opinions from consumers' and practitioners' responses. Distinct similarities and differences in responses based on either gender or profession have been presented as a distinctive sub-theme under this section.

Chapter 5, Discussion and Summary, ties the findings back to the research questions. It presents a collective view of the responses, and of the conclusions drawn from the responses as answers to the research questions posed earlier. This chapter also includes a section on limitations to this thesis and research methodology, and a brief argument on the need and suggested direction for future research.

From here, the thesis will transition into a detailed review of history, culture and socio-political state of Pakistan at the time of its creation in 1947 until the past decade. The study will take a look into how religious values, political leadership, and culture were

shaped as a collective face of the Pakistani society. The upcoming chapter, Literature Review, will further describe the changes that have evidently occurred in the society, will reflect on whether they were positive or negative from a gender roles and stereotypes' perspective, and how they affected the present-day state of the Pakistani society.

CHAPTER 2: *LITERATURE REVIEW*

The literature review for this thesis covers a macro-level overview of the history of advertising industry in Pakistan, the effects and circumstances of mass media regulations in Pakistan from the early 1950s and their relationship with politics. Secondly, a historical perspective on women's representation in the society, gender roles and stereotypes in the advertisement works from Pakistan is put together through an informal content analysis and scholarly publications. Finally, perspectives on Pakistani advertising and gender representations from veterans are outlined as the fundamental building block for this thesis.

This background is also referenced from some studies conducted and set in India, which is culturally very similar to Pakistan. Certain effects of and similarities with the Indian culture can be seen till date commonly in the Pakistani society. Pakistan and India, before 1947's partition, were one geographic state on the world map, and that explains some relevance of Indian literature to Pakistani context, especially discussed in the advertising practitioners' view included in chapter 5.

HISTORY OF ADVERTISING, ITS REGULATIONS, AND ASSOCIATIONS IN PAKISTAN

This section is sourced from two books: “Mass Media Laws and Regulations in Pakistan – and a commentary from a historical perspective”, written by Javed Jabbar, a Pakistani advertising veteran, and co-compiled by Qazi Faez Isa, a judge in the Pakistan Supreme Court since September 2014. The book was published in 1997, funded through a UNSECO grant from the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). The second book is called “Soap and Soul: Marketing and Advertising in Asia and Pakistan”, also written by Javed Jabbar, and published in 1995.

Javed Jabbar is a former senator and federal minister of Pakistan. He is also the chairman and chief executive of J.J. Media (Private) Limited, and served as the personal representative to Pakistani prime minister, Benazir Bhutto - the first woman prime minister of any Muslim state in the world. During his association, Javed Jabbar was also elected the co-chairman of the planning committee for the World Summit on Children in September 1990 at the United Nations. Javed Jabbar has a distinctive interest and contribution to mass media, advertising and policy-making spheres of Pakistan.

Compared to the world’s oldest legacy of parliamentary democracy of the United Kingdom, where a regulatory organization – Advertising Standards Authority – scrutinizes the works of advertising, Pakistan is in need of a similar body since the 1950s. Mainly advertising and mass media are severely affected when governmental bodies, plagued with

bureaucracy, intervene with the freedom of mass media, and introduce a government-centric mandate to guide and regulate mass media efforts. In Pakistan, ever since the country was created to recognize and congregate a nation based on religious identity, the systems of power are more focused on acquiring and growing their own influence. Instead of regulating mass media communication standards and ethics, religion is often used, and misused, as the basis of decision-making merely to gain acceptance from the masses who are easily pressurized into believing they are complying with religion, whereas in reality, they lose their right to freedom of speech. Pakistan Advertising Association (PAA) is the single entity that possesses the influence and power to initiate and meet this regulatory need in the communication sector, but its scale and efforts toward maintaining and regulating policies still need muscle.

Among the very first advertising regulations was the Karachi Indecent Advertisement Prohibition Act, 1951. Karachi was the capital city of Pakistan at the time hence the amendment was centered and passed in this economic and political center. However, no definite description or explanation of “indecent” is provided in the act. Following it, the act’s amendment that followed in 1963 included the fundamental definition of “indecent”:

“Whatsoever may amount to any incentive to sensuality and excitement of impure thoughts in the mind of an ordinary man of a normal temperament, and has the tendency to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influence, and which is

deemed to be detrimental to public morals and calculated to produce pernicious effect in depriving and debauching the minds of persons.”

The year 1963 was tainted with General Zia Ul Haq’s military presidency in Pakistan; some more background on this will be included within this section. The definition of “indecent” in advertisements, as outlined above, touches on two key ideas: sensuality is “impure”, and the primary addressee or beneficiary of the act is a man, which is ironic because it is a stretch to say that any advertisement has been effective without featuring a woman in it. This observation also stems from the ideology prevalent during General Zia’s presidency: *Islamization* of Pakistan.

During 1971, East (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (now Islamic Republic of Pakistan) were going through the turmoil, allegedly created by India, crucially located in the middle of the two geographic regions of the newly-formed state of Pakistan. It was at this time when the relationship between advertising and politics came on the forefront more than ever. The federal government, according to Javed Jabbar’s book “Soap and Soul”, used advertising for the first time to project its foreign policy aspects. In 1978, Pakistan also played a significant part in the establishment of Asian Federation of Advertising Associations, founded at the 11th Asian Advertising Congress.

A decade later, under the Companies Ordinance, 1984, Pakistan Advertising Association was formed to protect and uphold the industry practices and promote a

progressive culture at par with international standards. The association was headquartered in Karachi and its operations were to extend Pakistan-wide. Among the 26 objectives of the association outlined in Javed Jabbar's book, four major themes stand out: 1) to encourage and improve the standards of advertising work in the country, 2) to protect the interests of advertising agencies and their financial compensations, 3) to encourage an educational culture among the agencies and establish a culture of mutual growth in the industry, and 4) to ensure independent and non-government mandated representation of the industry on political and governmental fronts.

The first Pakistani Advertising Congress held by the PAA in 1979 was a landmark toward achieving this goal, despite some political and strategic differences within the PAA's executive committees. A formal commitment toward better co-operation and addressing problems in the mass communication industry was formulated exactly one year later, in September 1980, and a document outlining these strategies, IMPACT, was published. It witnessed little progress and discontinuity due to repeatedly changing executive committees.

The first ever marketing conference for young and senior professionals was organized in 1992, titled as 'MarCon'. Javed Jabbar, an advertising and mass media veteran in Pakistan, mentions in his book 'Soap and Soul: Marketing and Advertising in Asia and Pakistan' (published in 1995) an excerpt from his address at MarCon 1992, that the GDP rate of Pakistan increased by 6.5% in Pakistan from 1991 to 1992, and Pakistan was also

listed among the top 10 developing countries by the World Bank in 1992. He also touches on the 30:70 ratio between the urban and rural areas of Pakistan respectively in 1992, projected to become 50:50 by 2000. Given this economic fabric, advertising in Pakistan operated generally on four main strategies, according to Javed Jabbar:

1. Products with either mass demand like tea, shoes, cigarettes do well, or products with a highly selective market (for instance, a local pharmacist or *hakim*, as called in Urdu) produce measurable advertising results
2. Advertising with notable frequency across a variety of media applicable to Pakistan (TV, radio, print)
3. Relating the quality of a product to an international, preferably western, standard of quality, as with cigarettes for example
4. Using simple words and images to ensure easy recall

Aligning with these strategies, Jabbar (1995) references three iconic examples from historic Pakistani advertisements. The first example is of the tea brand, Lipton, and its advertisement produced in the 1960s, using situational references with a jingle (simple words and images put together in a musical format to augment recall). The second example is of the Peek Freans Pied Piper. This biscuit producer and distributor chose a distinct and western folklore character, the pier piper, that aired for the first time in 1973 and became a unique symbol of advertising, especially among children, ever since. The third example is of Gold Leaf – the tagline stated, “for the taste alone” and a character of the “Gold

Leaf Man” who portrayed a sophisticated and wealthy Englishman, always in the search of fine paintings, metal works and other forms of artwork. These examples and the four strategies explain some basic ground rules and practices for effective advertising in Pakistan at the time, and how advertising embraced the influence of the west in its cultural representation.

The history of Pakistani advertising and modern day, gender-centric consequences

PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) is the only regulatory body that exercises its rights to ban content or specifically, ads, that do not comply with their policies and regulations regarding “socially acceptable content”. Sex education, contraception and even food products and services have often been under siege. Following are a few advertisements that have been banned within the past year, 2017, by PEMRA for many complex reasons:

1. Igloo Moments, an ice cream bar (for allegedly including sexually seductive and suggestive content)
2. Josh condoms (for being sexually explicit)
3. Ads from two telecommunication service providers, Zong and Oppo (for featuring women with “bold and seductive” mannerisms)

A common theme in all these advertisements is females being featured in various, subjectively unacceptable ways, as stated by PEMRA in different public statements. Twitter conversations in particular from Pakistan highly criticized PEMRA's decision to ban the first referenced example, the campaign run by Igloo Moments. The commercial features an indulgent experience of product consumption by a woman, and her mannerisms were allegedly seductive hence the restriction. If the same advertisement featured a man adopting the exact mannerism, the decisions would have been different.

The latter two examples feature public figures and celebrity. The condom ads from Josh were banned one after the other over the past couple of years, for suggestive and sexually explicit content. Sexual education in the country is nearly non-existent. Restrictive gender roles and rejecting open dialogue around issues influenced by gender roles, like sexual education and even more importantly, contraception, are taking a severe hit from this mindset, primarily fed by the moral police and religious scholars. Factors like these play a complex role in reinforcing gender stereotypes. The telecommunication ads referenced as examples were also banned for similar reasons, however, the content differed to the mere extent of featuring "dances" by female celebrities who were not even citizens of Pakistan.

These cases of advertisements being banned and communications taken off-air for "suggestive content" almost always include a woman whose behavior is being objected to. In addition to the three most recent examples referenced above, another fast-moving consumer good (FMCG) brand, Slice featured an Indian film actress consuming the product

in a rather seductive manner. The cases of marketing communications being banned more often than not in the interest of restricting a female's representation has been a continuous occurrence. Taking these factors into consideration as this research study investigates consumers' opinions on the subject is consequently, essential.

WOMEN AND GENDER ROLES IN PAKISTAN: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

For women living in Pakistan, whether Muslim or not, gender inequality and social representation have always been debated. Ever since Pakistan's creation in 1947, women's representation has been a subject pertaining to the extent to which women's rights generally acceptable in western democracies align with an Islamic society (U.S. Library of Congress). This debate also stems from the broader two-faced reality of the British India reform and the Muslim nationalist movement that led to the creation of Pakistan.

Nadeem (2014) highlights how internal contentions in the South Asian subcontinent before its partition in 1947 began surfacing during the British rule. Prior to British colonization, differences like religion and caste weren't as pronounced or socially seen as an agenda by the common people. In a book review of 'Censorship in South Asia: Cultural Regulation from Sedition to Seduction' (authors: Raminder Kaur and William Mazzarella) published by SAGE Media, Culture & Society, the reviewers touch on critical arguments of the book. The editors touch on how the boom of commercial media also

unveiled the contradictory aspects of South Asian culture in the globalization era – contextualized in the 1990s when consumerism was paired and influenced by raging religious nationalism in the sub-continent (the region is now represented by India, Pakistan and Bangladesh). The reference to religion painted against the 90s’ backdrop in this book is particularly indicative of the cultural, political and public revolutions at the time – marked by what many scholars refer to as the mass displacement of the sub-continent. The partition of India and creation of Pakistan pivoted on religion as the prime driver. Religion, deeply rooted in Pakistan’s creation, rather the very basis of it, projected implications on how women may come to the forefront in various cultural, public, political, and mass media while adhering to Islamic rules like *pardah* (the act of covering one’s head, face and body). This school of thought has, in its entirety, affected representation of women and associated stereotypes on all fronts, more so public facing socio-cultural spheres like advertising.

This was the foundation upon which gender roles in Pakistan were established, concurrently giving way to gender stereotypes that came about with greater force, packaged in religion and policed by the *mullahs* (religious scholars) who proclaimed implementation of religious rules through their integration in the state constitution, among other ways, beginning in 1947. The effects can be observed even today – young, unmarried women publicly interacting with men confidently is still a stereotype of being “unreligious” or “too bold for a girl”. Advertisements were traditionally impacted when they had little choice but to portray young girls in domestic roles following their mother’s footsteps. The trend is slowly changing through industry practitioners’ influence toward a more religiously

neutral and women-empowering stance, which will be further dissected and explained in the following sections.

Rai Shakil Akhtar, author of the book “Media, Religion and Politics in Pakistan”, published in 2000 by Oxford University Press, references a study that was conducted about media, religion and politics in Pakistan. The study included questions on the stance of publishing photographs and on television, and role of women in contemporary society. The questionnaire was distributed among 50 *ulema* or religious scholars. In response to the question of whether or not Islam gives women the right to engage in economy, 96% respondents agreed. About modern means of representation in society like media, film, advertising, and politics, 61% agreed. Contradicting the prior statements, 72% of the respondents also agree that women cannot travel alone within or outside the country because it is not permissible by religion. Similarly, while 62% *ulema* who responded to the questionnaire agree that women have a right to vote, but a higher ratio of 69% believe that women should not contest for electoral candidacy; 71% believe women should not be elected as state representative.

This is only one instance that represents the religious value systems that scholars (*ulema*) and religious practitioners (*mullahs*) preach. This self-contradictory scenario not only makes it exceedingly challenging for women to counter-argue simply because it is justified as being “religiously accurate”, but it is also a matter that both women and men deal with on a day-to-day basis.

How women are exposed to conflicts on political, public safety and economic fronts is also highly indicative of the issue at hand. Naqvi and Riaz (2015), in their study ‘Women in Pakistan: Countering Conflicts and Building Peace’, published in Asian Journal of Women, looks deeply into this area of women representation in the Pakistani society. They analyze the impact of conflict on women and outline two key themes that are most likely to occur in such a scenario: the relationship between conflicts, religion and deprivation of hope, and secondly, gender inequality and vulnerability of women. Gender inequality is particularly essential to this thesis. Naqvi and Riaz (2015) also touch on radicalization in the Southern Punjab, Pakistan, where conservatism is increasing and resulting in more restrictions on women. The respondents in their study, who are primarily female peacebuilding activists, hint at misuse of religion to restrict their initiatives for increasing women’s representation in peacebuilding roles and governmental affairs. All these facts and realities call for greater attention and the role of advertising, if found of significant impact in mitigating gender stereotypes in the region through this thesis, becomes monumental in this context.

According to the Human Development Report by UNDP (1999), on the Gender Empowerment Measure, Pakistan ranked at 100 out of 185 countries – which is evidently below average. Another Human Development Report (figure 1) released by UNDP (1995-2015) shows a steady decrease in the Gender Inequality Index for Pakistan as shown in figure 4. The report shows that from 1995 to 2015, the gender inequality index value for

Pakistan's population has decreased to 0.55 to 0.79. In these two decades, what were the causes that resulted in the index values dropping steadily over the years? How did that change reflect in advertising? Did it influence advertising in any way? Did advertising influence this trend of decreasing gender index values? One of the aims of the thesis will be exploring what the advertising industry considers its role to be in this scenario.

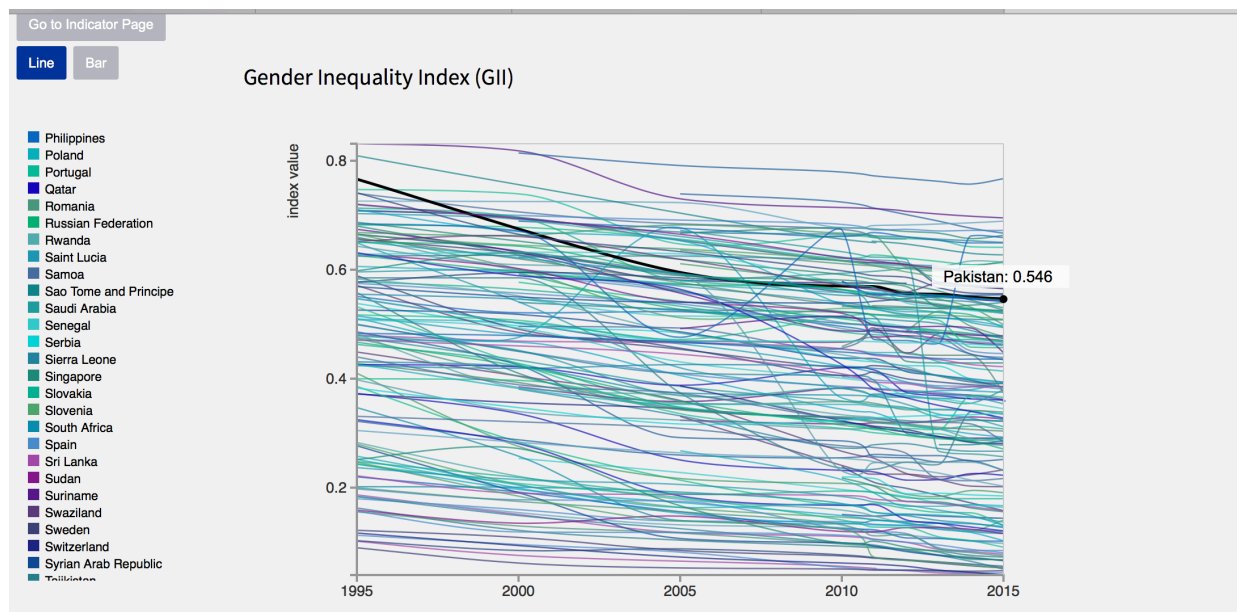


Figure 1

Grunenfelder (2013) studied representation of women in Pakistan and found three key patterns defining women's representation in the workforce: 1) women's work contributes to national development, 2) women's representation in workforce is a danger to the nation and lastly, 3) women's representation in the workforce as nonexistent. She

looks into the first theme and grounds this finding into Muhammad Ali Jinnah's (founder of Pakistan) quote:

“...Pakistan will be a progressive country in the building of which women will be seen working shoulder to shoulder with men in every department of life.”

She also references this theme from a historic juncture, when Benazir Bhutto was elected as the first female prime minister in the 1980s – the first ever for any state officially declared Muslim, and certainly the first for Pakistan. Despite these milestones for female representation in Pakistan's workforce especially in politics, legal provisions for women in the constitution remained minimal. Grunenfelder (2013) also touches on General Zia Ul Haq's military rule from 1977 to 1988 the impact of which was twofold: while women's non-domestic engagement was overshadowed by other state matters that General Zia tended to, a Woman's Division was also created in the Cabinet Secretariat to provide a blueprint of national development, and it was inclusive of female representation on national economic and political fronts.

The second theme that Grunenfelder (2013) touches on is deeply rooted in the literature and history, where professionally employed women were seen as a danger to the nation. The Muslim nationalist movement of 1940s combined with the national rhetoric, religion and gender discourses led to women becoming a symbol of national identity of the newly formed state that was declared *Islamic*. Unsurprisingly, women became the state's

national honor embodiment in the eyes of those with power and influence, like the religious scholars (Ansari (2009), Jamal (2006), Rouse (2004), Toor (2007)). All these events consequently led to 1963, when female representation in politics was under heated debate. Fatima Ali Jinnah, Muhammad Ali Jinnah's sister, contested for presidency after her brother's demise in 1948, and was denied candidatureship against General Ayub Khan on the basis of a 1960 argument put forward by, arguably, a *Jamat-i-Islami* (Islamic congregation) politician – "...politics and administration are not fields of activity for womenfolk," without clarity on the author and date, according to Grunenfelder (2013). General Zia Ul Haq's presidency's contradictions, despite the Women Division that was formed in the Cabinet, started gaining momentum, prominently marked by the one instance when 'the Pakistani woman' was replaced by the '*Islami* woman' socially and culturally, required to dress a certain way and to work only in certain capacities, mostly domestic.

Given the historic backdrop of women's representation, gender roles and stereotypes were shaped in a state that was formed on the basis of two nations (that previously inhabited the sub-continent before the partition of 1947), and got swept away under the veil of religion, spearheaded by conservationists and *mullahs* (religious scholars and preachers).

Jafar (2009) presents a comprehensive view of Pakistan's political history with a focus on women specifically. During 1988-1999, Pakistan saw four alternate periodicals of two prime ministers: Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. While the country's political

and social fabric was severely damaged, Bhutto's government managed to introduce a Women's Ministry to acknowledge that women of Pakistan needed not just representation in the governmental sector, but faced issues on a macro level that needed attention and reform. However, Nawaz Sharif, the following prime minister elect before Bhutto's second election, introduced the *Shariat* bill in 1991 which gave state representatives and lawmakers the wide space to turn over any ruling that may be *non-Islamic*.

The past decade was an economic and cultural shift for the Pakistani women. A New York Times article, 'Necessity Pushes Pakistani Women into Jobs and Peril', outlines the story of a 22-year old girl from Pakistan who faces domestic abuse for choosing to take on a cashier's job at McDonald's when her family's sole earner, her father, could not provide for the family on his own anymore. Pakistan was ranked at 133 out of 134 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report, 2010. These young women, a majority of them without a higher education degree, resort to leaving homes and opting to work defying the forced norm due to inflation – which was 13.8% in 2010, increased from 2.9% in 2003, and dropped to 3.8% in 2016 according to World Bank. Making a monthly salary of \$100 in 2010 and contributing it all to the household is probably not expected of Saima, the girl whose story the New York Times article documented. It is acceptable for men to concentrate their honor and pride in the act of confining a woman, be it her brother, husband, or father, and is considered synonymous to protecting women. Gender stereotypes and their roots in the socio-cultural system of Pakistan are reflected at their extreme in this one scenario.

PAKISTANI ADVERTISING: INFORMAL CONTENT ANALYSIS

This section analyzes works of the Pakistani ad industry from a gender roles' perspectives and dissects stereotypical content's potential effects on viewers' attitudes. For several years now, practitioners and academics have been researching and debating gender representations, more specifically so, the imagery of women in advertisements. Applied to a Pakistani context, till date, stereotypical aspects of a woman's role have been seen frequently. Women are typically shown in a domestic household setting. While she is portrayed as "domestically" empowered, the very concept of putting an upper limit to her position in the society severely discounts the scope of progress for the female population. On economic, professional and international fronts, this makes an impact on the perception of the common people. These restrictions and their effects vary with socio-economic level, the educational level attained by members of a family – male and female both, and ingrained cultural factors.

Seventy years after the Muslim nationalist movement that resulted in the creation of Pakistan in 1947, violation of women's rights is prevalent but gradually decreasing, or at least it is being acknowledged by factions of society as a critical social issue. UN Women released a mass-reach TV commercial campaign in 2016, advocating women empowerment and highlighting girls and women who made a mark in various walks of life,

ranging from a television actress to a mountaineer and farmer. This is an advancement in the direction that an article from 2015, ‘What Do Women in Our Ads Usually Do?’ by Talha bin Hamid - from a leading Pakistani publication focused on advertising, Aurora - encourages ad makers to take. The article brings to attention the stereotypical reflection of women in advertisements that are considered “positive” or “traditionally rich” for married women and young girls alike. Primarily under focus in the article are the various stereotypical roles of women, like a newly-wed girl’s fate in the new family being evaluated on the basis on how well she can make a dessert, and the need for eradicating serial objectification of women. Ullah & Khan (2014) conducted a study at the International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan on objectification of women in Pakistani TV commercials – a fairly understudied area so far. Using a critical discourse analysis, their study outlines some key themes that have contributed to objectifying women in the past: flawless and fair skin as a mark of beauty, and an ideal body shape being consistently portrayed for women to aspire for – essentially discounting women who may be considered “fat” as an acceptable body shape. Another article, ‘Representation of Social Inequality of Women in Advertisements’ by Kulsoom Lari references Pakistan Advertising Association’s survey findings: 75% of all advertisements that feature women are for a product that is used in either the kitchen or the bathroom; 56% of these women are shown in domestic roles (as of 2016).

Pakistan International Airlines was a trend setter in Pakistan advertisements in the 1960s – from textbooks to official boardroom meetings, the print advertisements are still

referenced as one of the most predominant works of that era. From a captivating headline, “Our unfair advantage” that hinted at a multi-faceted meaning of having an advantage of being the national carrier while also highlighting the pride in the “unfair” skin tone of an airhostess as the singular visual of the print ad, to featuring bold and confident airhostesses in their print ads frequently, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was able to set apart their positioning on the basis of gender representation before Zia Ul Haq’s religion-centric rules were imposed creating implications for mass media including advertising and filmmaking.

Skin lightening products’ advertisements is a widely accepted trend that deserves attention from scholars and practitioners from South Asia till date. Nadeem (2014) finds in his study that the desire for lighter toned skin derives from the desire for power, or the longing to become the privileged ‘other’. This desire is rooted in both the Indian caste system when referring to South Asia, and its effects rooted in the British colonization era are also observable in Pakistan even though the caste system is absent there. This desire, that reflects in behaviors, social belief systems and the fabric of social dynamic in Pakistan, has been deeply rooted particularly in Pakistani advertising.

Parameswaran and Cardoza (2009) identify three key messaging strategies that dominate the fairness products’ advertisements: transformation in skin and personality (from dark to lighter skinned with more confidence than before), scientific authority (to provide credibility and effectiveness evidence for the target group, predominantly

females), and heterosexual romance (marriages and romantic relationships tend to be uplifted when the woman's skin tone gets lighter after using an advertised product).

To look at the shift in advertisements' narrative over time, some product categories are best representative of gender roles and stereotypes. Aurora featured another article in 2015, outlining typical roles of Pakistani women in advertisements. It touches on two key categories, life insurance and any kitchen-centered food product, both of which solidify the stereotypes associated with a woman's roles in society: household chores, shopping, gossiping, making sure their husbands and children are provided for, etc. cover some of them. The article also touches on the stereotype associated with a woman who is not submissive or dependent, usually labeled as bossy or domineering. Rashna Abdi, the Executive Creative Director of IAL Saatchi & Saatchi, a leading agency in the business and popular culture, provides a clear outlook on key stereotype-plagued categories in one of her articles on the subject: detergent, life insurance, kitchen-centered products like cooking oil or dishwashing bar / liquid, and home appliances.

The detergent category is considerably prominent when it comes to gender roles and stereotypes in the Pakistani culture. The three brands that hold the biggest market shares are P&G's Ariel, Unilever's Surf Excel, and Colgate Palmolive's Brite Maximum Power. In an analysis put forward by Spectrum Y&R for internal consumption (which I had access to because I was the strategist working on the Brite Maximum Power account at the time), cited research from Group M Pakistan and identified three key messaging

themes in the category: first wash that removes stains and gives the “whitest wash”, stains as the cause of social embarrassment and compromised pride, and children as members of the family who get the most stains on their clothes. As the three advertisers seek to maintain and grow their market shares, only one of them took a step back to make a bold statement on the culture around gender roles: P&G’s Ariel. The TV commercial spot was conceptualized and produced in India, and run in the South Asian region (a common practice that multinational advertisers adopt for cutting down production costs).

The TV commercial (first aired in 2015) titled ‘Share the Load’ revolved around an apologetic letter from a father who takes responsibility for not raising her daughter with the notion that making a home is the task of both man and woman. He observes in his daughter’s home how she is juggling with work, raising a child and making sure everything is in order for her husband, all at the same time. The father apologizes for how unshared responsibilities are pushed over to women who usually accept it because they are raised to think that’s the best they can get, as long as their husbands or in-laws aren’t confining her behind the walls of their home. For P&G’s Ariel, not only annual sales rocketed, but they were able to start a conversation around typical gender roles in domestic households.

The follow-up TV commercial striking another aspect of the gender stereotype debate was aired in 2016, where the title shifted from ‘Share the Load’ to ‘Wash the Label’. The concept focuses on how women stereotype other women and that it may be based on nothing more than an assumption. The concept stems from the stereotype associated with

female representation in leadership roles and the skepticism generally linked with women in authority. A detergent brand taking a stance on this cultural tension indicates that practitioners are aiming to shift the consumer lens on advertising toward societal issues that can be addressed or at the very least, can benefit from an awareness standpoint from advertising.

Another common theme for product promotion is to feature slice-of-life moments from a married couple. Typically and traditionally, the wife is featured in domestic roles and depends on the husband for important decisions; Jubilee Life Insurance's commercial from 2015 is an example – the man of the house is worried about affording college tuition for his son and wedding expenses for his daughter – showcasing gender roles that are perceived as normative and are widely accepted in the society. The article 'Five Pakistani Ads That Are a Must-Watch' by Taniya Hasan, published in Aurora – a trimonthly magazine and e-magazine publication focused on “promoting excellence in advertising” – reviews five selected pieces of high-standard advertising. For starters, it refers to the slice-of-life approach that has been flipped on its head for a household electronic appliance's brand, Kenwood, coated with good humor, and shows the wife in a more witty and influential role instead of an influenced one. The review also mentions that it is a refreshing perspective welcomed by the viewers and practitioners.

The same Aurora article also reviews a commercial by a clothing brand, Gul Ahmed. The ad focuses on facial features or habits of women that are often stereotyped as

“imperfect” in the society until a few years ago. The commercial boldly re-claims those “imperfections” as rather perfect so that women have the freedom and opportunity of finally being comfortable in their own skin. It’s interesting to note that yet again, the super model featured in this commercial has a skin tone closer to tan, and is not ‘fair’, which is an ingrained stereotype in Pakistan and India. The cultural setting requires women to make efforts for a lighter-toned skin color, as it “ideally” promises prospects in terms of social validity, peer pressure is lifted from women and even from men to an extent if they are “fairer”, women tend to receive better marriage proposals, etc. This commercial clearly makes a conscious and pronounced effort to break more than one stereotypes.

Grau & Zotos (2016) look at the concept of ‘femvertising’ in detail, and their work is also referenced in another section of this literature review. The concept, as the name indicates, means advertising that features women empowerment and aspects of feminism. In an article from Aurora ‘The Politics of ‘Femvertising’’, published in the third quarterly of 2017, talks about femvertising in Pakistan and mentions two examples: UN Women’s #unbeatable and the other about an awareness initiative for calcium deficiency among women. This situational trend in Pakistani advertising also connects with David Ogilvy’s quote, “Advertising reflects the norms of a society but it does not influence them.” The topic has been debated for a long time among advertising academics and researchers. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze whether or not the notion stands true for a developing country and economy like Pakistan where gender roles and stereotypes originate from

peculiar tradition and history, and how they have changed over the years through advertising, if so.

In his book ‘Soap and Soul: Marketing and Advertising in Asia and Pakistan’, Javed Jabbar also highlights the accepting sentiment for a certain level of exaggeration and idealism in advertisements. Once creative conceptualization allows more and more of these two notions to influence the message execution, it becomes harder to draw a line between idealism and realism in these depictions, and it starts taking away from the credibility of the message’s claim. Two examples that he uses to explain exaggeration also belong to the categories that have been referenced earlier in the literature review: neither do women appreciate their detergent with a smile and surmounting gratitude, nor do men smoke cigarettes to primarily impress women.

Summarizing gender stereotypes and modern portrayal of women in advertising

All in all, the following pointers highlight some deeply rooted gender stereotypes that are typically featured in Pakistan ads:

1. Women being featured in a domestic household role, where she is portrayed as an empowered decision-maker but needs to be validated by a male figure.
2. Flawless skin and an idealistically thin body frame as a mark of women’s beauty.

3. A majority of women being featured in a product related with the kitchen or bathroom (Pakistan Advertising Association).
4. A woman who is not submissive or dependent on anyone being portrayed as “bossy” or domineering.

Recent works of advertisement have made the effort of breaking away from these stereotypes. A few highlights or prominent examples of such integrated campaigns are listed below:

1. UN Women “Beat Me” campaign – 2016

Initiated by the global nonprofit, UN Women, this campaign portrays Pakistani women in perceivably stereotypical roles, and highlights the strength that the same woman possesses. The physical strength of a woman who works in the farms to express that she isn’t domesticated or weak. The ability of women to create life. Women who have made a mark in music, writing, business and sports. All these concepts are integrated into one long-form advertisement aimed at mitigating stereotypes of female roles in society.

2. P&G Ariel “Share the Load” campaign – 2015

From the perspective of an elderly father, this campaign mitigates the stereotype that a household is primarily a female’s responsibility even if she is juggling a professional life along with it, and that a man is never held accountable for contributing in domestic duties anymore.

3. P&G Ariel follow up campaign “Wash the Label” – 2016

Labeling women as bossy or domineering in a workplace doesn’t always come from male coworkers. This campaign addresses the construct from another woman’s perspective, and shows the gap between reality and perception in the context of eliminating labels for women.

4. Witty roles of a traditional couple in Kenwood’s “Be Happy” campaign – 2016

Typically, a wife would be portrayed as responsible for hosting guests, cooking meals and being representative of domestic responsibilities in a household. Men dominating power-driven roles are the norm in ads, but this campaign breaks away from the notion, and promotes the idea of shared responsibility through a humorous approach.

5. Gul Ahmed’s “I’m Imperfect” campaign – 2017

Addressing idealistic physical appearances expected of women in the society, this campaign highlights all the perceived imperfections and showcases confidence of women in owning them as their personality unapologetically.

6. Maybelline New York’s #MakerWomen – 2016 & 2017

The campaign featured celebrity and common women who are making a mark in several Pakistani industries. The background song, sung by Ali Sethi, a rising Pakistani music icon, includes lyrics that translate to “Step forward if you have the courage to match ours”, lauding women’s courage and contribution to different walks of life, from music, sport, and fashion to art and photography.

All the referenced ads above aim to address the typical stereotypes that consumers do not even detect mostly when they are exposed to them. Cultural values rarely ever change, proven many a times by research literature, and these gender roles and stereotypes have reached deep into the Pakistani culture over time. With the advent of social media, increased global awareness and a youth bulge in the population, gender roles are becoming a more fluid concept and recent advertisements are clearly reflecting this change. This research study will investigate whether consumers detect this change and attribute it to the influence of advertising on society.

Breaking away from traditional concepts of advertising beyond gender

Another eye grabbing pointer in the review is Lenovo's Hello Pakistan campaign. Not only does it break away from the automatic strategy of casting celebrity spokespersons and puts forward an advertisement that plays on nationalistic emotions, it rings a bell under the layers of time: Morven Gold's Rhythm of Unity. The TV commercial from the cigarette brand aired in mid-90s and set a clutter-breaking approach in the forefront of advertisements that were, at the time, embedded in product promotion and sale promotion more than any other aspect of cultural advertising. Backtracking to Lenovo's commercial: it brings together Mehreen Jabbar, daughter of the advertising veteran Javed Jabbar, as the director; Hira Tareen, a young musician for background scores; and Ameen J for photography direction – a photography professional who has been highly recognized and

acclaimed for his national and international work. Not only does the Lenovo commercial provide a refreshing break and a nostalgic reminiscing in a blend, it also projects the art of filmmaking and storytelling that is rejuvenated in Pakistan.

A territorial strategy that has broken out as another fad, or trend, in the beverage industry is taking away from tea-drinkers' market share. Tea is deeply rooted in the Pakistani country, nation and culture. A pro-British colonial era effect, or a tradition trickling down from the era of the Moguls – tea has always been closely knit into tradition for Pakistanis. In the past two years, however, major category players of carbonated drinks and coffee segments have made pronounced and persistent attempts at convincing people to give room to alternative choices in a space that is claimed, saturated, and ruled by tea drinkers. Not only have these efforts produced resistant sentiment among the consumers, but they have also given way to a brand war on social media channels. The article 'Coke vs. Chai: Here Comes a New Brand War' from Pakistan Today, a leading e-newspaper, outlines key strategies that CocaCola, one of the biggest ad spenders, implemented advertising and communication messaging against tea. The campaigns aren't directed toward a specific tea brand – it is more so about claiming the territory by tea as an organic category itself. These strategies only drive one to think that practitioners and viewers together are willing to accept a shift in traditional ways of looking at society – and gender roles are a critical area for striking more conversations and eliminating stereotypes that are embedded into the cultural fabric of the South Asian sub-continental country.

RESEARCH LITERATURE ON THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISING GENDER STEREOTYPES

For the past five decades, it has been debated whether advertising merely reflects stereotypes and socio-cultural norms in a society, or if it has the power to change or rather reframe them. Stereotypes are inaccurate representations of beliefs and behaviors of a culture, whereas gender stereotypes concern inaccurate representations about social hierarchy and gender roles in a social system. Grau & Zotos (2016) review the existing research on gender stereotypes and advertising, and provide a comprehensive overview of scholarly research on the subject from the past decade. They also look at the social role of advertising and how it has been debated by scholars over the years. One of the key takeaways in the research review by Grau & Zotos (2016) is the concept of ‘femvertising’ – portrayal of empowered women in advertising works.

The cultivation theory by Gerber (1998) suggests that people’s perceptions are based on what advertising reflects, and they develop a belief system that they believe gets them closer to the values advertised through media. The concept of “cultivation” that is explicated in this study is not merely effects of mass media messaging on culture. He proposes that television, for instance, does not create or reflect opinions and beliefs; it is rather an intermingled process of both.

Eisend, M., J. Plagemann, and J. Sollwedel (2014) explored another direction that while advertising still reflects gender stereotypes, consumer perception of it depends on the context of the advertisement. Male stereotypes were observed more in humorous advertisements whereas female stereotypes were found in more non-humorous instances. Various analyses have been conducted by researchers during the last decade, studying the relationship between advertising, stereotypes, and gender roles. Eisend (2010) presents a quantitative study reviewing 64 studies on gender stereotyping. He found that gender stereotyping still exists and represents gender roles in a hierarchical order – especially for women. Chu, Lee and Kim (2016) find in a study of non-stereotypical gender representations (NSGR) that its effects are neither positive nor negative on a society, and is rather a dual effect. A positive effect was observed via novelty perception and a negative effect coexisted due to cognitive resistance.

Huhmann & Limbu (2016) conducted a study in a US-based adult sample to investigate attitudes toward advertising in general and its determinants. They found that the more the consumers perceive advertisements to be representing gender stereotypes, the less favorable their attitude toward advertising in general will be. They also base their study in prior research which shows that three quarters of US and Canadian women believe that advertising inaccurately portrays women, primarily through four key themes: 1) women will always be indulged in domestic chores, 2) women will be dependent on men, 3) women will not make important decisions, and 4) women depicted primarily as sex objects. 63% women also agreed that advertising portrays men inaccurately, where Sheehan (2014)

further confirmed it with a study that found 80% male advertising portrayals to be inaccurate as well. While gender stereotypes in advertising have been researched and studied, Huhmann & Limbu (2016) investigate gender stereotypes as a determinant of attitude toward advertising in general, and find that attitudes toward sex and nudity in ads predicts advertising offensiveness for the US-based sample.

Ahmed Belkaoui and Janice M. Belkaoui (1976) report that advertisements have not kept up with progress in women's representation in the society. They report this through comparison and content analysis of US print advertisements from 1958 to 1970 and 1972. They choose 1958 as the referential point because it was a decade before the feminist movement was initiated and mobilized. For the content analysis, 729 print ads were pulled from eight different magazines including the *Life*, *Look*, *Newsweek*, *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *Saturday Review*, *U.S. News and World Report*, and *Readers' Digest*. In the 1970 study, few women were shown in decision-making roles or outside home. The follow-up study which was conducted in 1972 showed a rise in portrayal of women in influential roles, however, such was not the case for big ticket purchases like appliances or car brands.

Lewis and Neville (1995) also provide a background on America's working women and their historic representation in the workforce. The underemployment rate in the US decreased by approximately 12% in merely six years as women started joining the workforce in 1937. They were either labor-intended, or for armed forces since this was occurring on a World War II center-stage. Though just as quickly in 1945, as male disabled

soldiers were discharged from hospitals, and re-settled into workplaces, women were taken out of the workforce for many claim that women would have been happier to be out of the everyday hustle and at peace inside homes.

Coe, Hamilton and Tarr (2004) examined ads from product categories that portrayed gender roles in most of their advertisements. A content analysis of 14,000 print advertisements from four women's magazines, including one for white women and one specifically targeted toward black women, generated results for their study: Women are often portrayed in ads with little expression on their purchase decision making power. They are portrayed to be making decisions that are relevant to their children or homes. The context for this study and portrayal of women from a social and societal lens can be described through this statistical overview: Women's 60% representation in the labor workforce was constituted by American women over age 16 by 1999. The median age of women getting married in 1998 was 25 years old – a significant change from 1970 when the median age was 20.8 years. Women who never married from 30 to 34 years rose to 21.6% from 6.2% between 1970 and 1998. Given the context, that describes how a majority of women were likely to be head of households, which statistically rose from 10.7% in 1970 to 17.8% in 1998. While the societal context described through this study shows an evident shift in women's roles at home and at work, the advertisements seemed to not be reflecting the trend for people who were exposed to them. The industry at the time seemed to be struggling with breaking away from patriarchal imagery of women.

An article in The Sunday Times, London, from February 1990 states how ads portraying gender equality often falter because of women's hurdled representation in the industry as practitioners. Written by Rufus Olins, the article sources information from a survey conducted for Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA), which states that even though women constitute roughly 50% of the staff in the agencies surveyed, only 14% women have representation among board directors of those agencies. The same survey also states that among the four main functions in an advertising agency – planning, media, account management, and creative – women struggle most with creative representation which is primarily male dominated.

From the London of 1990s, the lens shifts to 1963 and the advertising scene in Pakistan. An advertising veteran in Pakistan, Javed Jabbar, stated in an interview that the Indecent Ad Ordinance (1963) is a law that still exists and denounces advertisements promoting fairer skin color or objectifying women, among other aspects of 'indecenty'. Due to lack of ethics reinforcement agencies, however, mass media has continued to convolute the imagery of women in advertisements. He also attributes cinema, and Pakistan International Airlines' print advertisements to bridging barriers to entry for women to be featured in ads. Particularly about cinema, he states that it was in the late 1980s when women were finally able to break the stereotype of not being "respectable" if they were to engage in singing, acting or theatrical appearances. Families began to accept that it wasn't against religion and cumulatively, theatre and cinema helped women enter advertising at the time. Agencies like J. Walter Thompson, Crawford Advertising and Manhattan

Advertising increased female representation in advertisements and laid the framework, according to Javed Jabbar.

In his book “Soap and Soul: Marketing and Advertising in Asia and Pakistan”, Javed Jabbar draws a comparison between the international advertising scene in the west and even closer to Pakistan itself – India, where advertising is a more formalized and structured industry, whereas Pakistan’s ad-industry had to deal with an infancy where practitioners would resort to their own social and familial networks for, say, finding cast and role-players for advertising spots that could potentially add credibility to the message through being well-suited for the character. More closely operating to gender roles, barriers to entry existed for both men and women in the beginning and women of course had to overcome higher levels of resistance if they sought to enter the industry of either advertising practice or modelling for the creative works.

As television became more rooted in the culture as a medium of communication, advertising as its function was able to draw people in, mitigating the barriers to entry gradually. Compared to 20 years of cinematic expanse in the Pakistani culture, advertising facilitated people enter the mass media industry as active role players more quickly and respectably in line with the cultural and social norms. A facet of this function was featuring children as integral characters of advertising works, which greatly molded the public perception in favor of advertising and increased its acceptance as a social function in a conservative and highly collectivistic culture at the time.

Zohra Yusuf, an advertising veteran and professional for 40 years, said in an interview with Slogan Magazine (2017) that during General Zia's military rule, censorship and specifically repressive rules for women's representation in advertisements dominated the mass media landscape. That was when Women's Action Forum was formed in response to General Zia's rule of "stoning" women as a punishment for adultery. She also talked about censorship till date playing a negative role by, for instance, not airing contraceptive and family planning commercials during prime time of television, mainly sourced by PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) – this greatly influences gender roles and stereotypes in the society 70 years after the formation of the state of Pakistan.

Yusuf also serves as the Chairperson of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. In the same interview, when asked about the state of human rights in the country, she describes religious minorities (Hindus, Christians, Ahmadis) as being in a more volatile and vulnerable state than women or labor force. This again ties back to gender roles in the society from the perspective of religion and what factors affect their representation on the mass media scene.

In her article 'Empowered, not stereotyped' published in Aurora's third quarterly issue in 2016, Rashna Abdi, the Executive Creative Director of IAL Saatchi & Saatchi, describes her viewpoint on whether or not a gender stereotype revolution is in the making as represented in advertisements and mass media of Pakistan. She draws a comparison of

advertisements with some international examples to open up another strategy of not losing the business objectives of creating an ad, while influencing culture in a positive way and to help the brand take a non-stereotypical stance on culture. She turns the focus toward political advancements in relation to women's rights and representation once more, as explained in the sections here earlier. While women rights and equal representation in the society are still struggling on societal and political fronts, like religious political parties rallying against the Women's Protection Bill, in her opinion advertisements are not making enough of an influential statement to initiate or indicate a change in culture.

In her opinion, other mass media outlets like soaps, dramas and films still feature women in stereotypes roles where women are shown either submissive or being expected to juggle home and workplace absolutely perfectly - should they choose to have a profession outside the confines of their home. In a survey research conducted with 20 consumers at her advertising agency, IAL Saatchi & Saatchi, none of them were able to remember how a daughter buys an air ticket for her father and hands it to him in the cooking oil commercial. She mentions another home appliance brand that has been making advertising efforts that reflect non-stereotypical gender roles in a very clear-cut slice-of-life concept but for four consecutive years, the advertising has been unable to perform as expected numbers-wise and from a business standpoint. She deems responsible the lack of integration of the product's role in the consumers' lives as currently depicted.

In another one of his books, 'The Global City', Javed Jabbar includes a section on women and their role in the contemporary society and media. The section is titled 'Media, Madams and Messages' and the book itself is a compilation of perspectives on how media and communication changed the way of living and the community from 1983 to 1998.

This section talks about three key areas where women's representation was either limited or severely influenced by traditional stereotypes of being at loss for power and restricted to domestic settings: 1) management and ownership of media, 2) representation of women in the workforce of media, specifically journalism, and 3) various outlets of media and subjects that are expressed through media, like dramas and film, where women could change the conversation in favor of increased representation. More women needed to be encouraged to consider mass communication and advertising as a viable, profitable and most importantly, "respectable" career choice.

Specifically, when it comes to owning media, it was an unlikely turn that women could expect in their favor because the state owned public media channels and the government regulated them at the time. Since it was government-mandated, it automatically turned media ownership to be more male-dominated like in various other aspects of society, culture and politics. At the time and ever since Pakistan's creation in 1947, not even a single chairperson, board member or station general manager of the Pakistan Television or Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation was a woman.

From a standpoint of the advertising industry and women practitioners, Javed Jabbar writes in the section ‘Media, Madams and Messages’, “I estimate that in 100 advertising agencies of Pakistan today there are no more than 2000 full-time advertising practitioners. Of these 2000 specialists, less than 10% are women. I estimate that there is a strong case to correct the numerical imbalance alone.”

Lastly, the section also outlines dramas and films that weighed in heavily on portraying women as dependent on either their husbands or sons, a form or another of male dominance. A lot of dramas would portray working women as either unhappy with their personal life or unsuccessful by the traditional definition at fulfilling their duties as mothers. Especially social workers would be portrayed as irresponsible and failing at love and fulfillment. Female screenplay and novel writers like Bano Qudsia, Fatima Surrayya and Haseena Moin took charge of driving the change in this lens for looking at women represented in mass media. Dramas like *Dhoop Kinaray* and *Tanhaiyan* finally took the center stage and portrayed each of the lead female characters in the two soaps as a successful professional – one, a doctor and another, an entrepreneur. This was among the first steps toward repositioning the role of women as projected in mass media outlets. Figures 5 and 6 provide an outlook at how women were featured in these two dramas.



Figure 2



Figure 3

This study aims to analyze how these shifts in gender roles over the years in Pakistan have affected the consumer perception today. What does the current consumer, regardless of the gender, think about gender roles in the society that they constitute, specifically when they come across an advertisement that portrays gender roles and stereotypes? The changes in how gender roles have evolved in Pakistan over time can be majorly accredited to the political landscape. Starting from a point where women were being accepted into the mass media, advertising and filmmaking industries and these were starting to be considered respectable professions for women in light of religion, to when the political fabric was flipped over under *Islamization* and gender roles, rights and stereotypes were packaged anew altogether resulting in suppression for women especially that can be observed in the country till date, this is a grey area of contradictions and controversies. This thesis aims to dissect the role, if any, that advertising has played in this evolution, and what the consumers think of it in the Pakistan of 2017 – precisely 70 years after the country appeared on the world map.

CHAPTER 3: *METHODOLOGY*

BACKGROUND

Attitudes toward a social construct such as gender roles have traditionally been investigated through both quantitative and qualitative methods, varying as per the goals and objectives of the research. This thesis investigates attitudes and beliefs of consumers and advertising practitioners in Pakistan toward changing gender roles and their depiction in ads through a qualitative method.

The Pakistani society and culture have significantly evolved in the past decade, which can be majorly attributed to the advent of social media. With increasing globalization, global awareness about social issues and access to information beyond geographical barriers, the Pakistani culture has started to address issues like domestic violence, child labor, equal opportunity for all genders in the national workforce, and more. In the given context, gender roles have significantly changed compared to how they were defined earlier than 2008. This cultural evolution has also affected the advertising scene in Pakistan. Mass communication and specifically advertising makes efforts to address social issues and specifically, downplay gender stereotypes. Brands have become more conscious about which social debates they have a responsibility toward, or the ones they want to be a

part of. To what extent this surface level change has also influenced the consumer mindset and priorities of advertising practitioners will be studied in this thesis.

METHODOLOGY DESIGN

Because these goals and objectives cannot be fulfilled through a unidimensional methodology or without two-way conversation, a qualitative research methodology is best suited: in-depth interviews. It allows follow-up questions and informal discussions which may reveal deeper insights and beliefs, and provides an opportunity during the interview to further explore the responses and sentiments behind the experiences that respondents choose to share.

The research agenda touches two social spheres, consumers and practitioners; the qualitative measure has been devised keeping in mind that their opinions and beliefs on the subject are likely to vary. In order to observe if that difference exists, all the respondents were recruited and organized into four pockets:

1. Male consumers
2. Female consumers
3. Male practitioners
4. Female practitioners

SAMPLING PLAN

Respondents were recruited through the snowballing technique i.e. starting with personal references, family and friends, respondents were contacted to inquire if they would give consent to participating in the research. The following demographic and social criteria were set for recruitment:

Consumer pockets

- Age: 25-45 years
- Respondents must
 - Have grown up in Pakistan, or spent at least the last 10 years in Pakistan
 - Have access to a television, smartphone or laptop for at least the last five years
 - Be at least a high school graduate
 - Self-identify as a Pakistani national

Practitioner pockets

- Age: 25-45 years
- Respondents must
 - Have an undergraduate college degree
 - Have worked in the advertising, journalism or a marketing communication discipline for the last five years (within or outside Pakistan)

- Have worked in a marketing communication discipline in Pakistan for at least a total of five years
- Have worked at a minimum of one advertising agency in Pakistan

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The following sections were put together to guide the conversations. The first section focuses on personal background and respondent's opinion on the Pakistani culture and its values; the second section is focused on representation of women in the Pakistani workforce and the challenges associated with it; the third section focused on in-depth opinions about depiction of gender roles in advertisements and how they contribute to or influence the social construct; and the fourth section was solely dedicated to the respondent's self-reported media use. Each interview had a minimum duration of 40 minutes and a maximum duration of 1 hour 45 minutes. The average duration was 72.5 minutes.

The same guiding questions were used for all respondent groups regardless of gender or association to a particular group out of the four. Using same questions also assisted observing how patterns and themes of the responses may be different or similar to one another. Following are the guiding questions used for all the interviews:

Section 1: perception of and attitude toward the Pakistani society & culture

1. What are some of the most important cultural values you have grown up with in Pakistan?
2. Do you think these cultural values represent Pakistani society accurately? What are some other aspects that describe the Pakistani culture and society?
3. Do you think the Pakistani society has changed in any way over the past decade? How would you describe that change?
4. How has that change personally affected you, if so? Do you agree with the direction the society is taking?
5. What comes to your mind when I say the words “social hierarchy” in reference to gender roles?
6. Can you share any personal experience that in your opinion describes a two-sided picture of the Pakistani culture?

Section 2: women in workforce

7. Do you think women’s representation is important for the workforce of Pakistan?
8. What do you think of the current representation? Is it ample in your opinion?
9. What do you think are some barriers that women may face if they aspire to work?

Section 3: perception of ads in relation with society

10. What do you think about ads? Do you think they're useful? If yes/no, why?
11. What role do you think ads play in the societal construct?
12. In your opinions, what should be the ideal role of ads in society, if any?
13. What is your favorite ad and why?
14. Can you give me a few examples of ads that showed what our society and cultural values as Pakistanis should ideally be like?
15. What do you think is a critical missing value from our advertisements?
16. Do you think religious values in Pakistan have an effect on the advertisements? Or not women's role in society? Can you describe how?

Section 4: media use

17. What do you do in your free time? Where do you consume entertainment? What shows / content do you watch and through which device / channel?
18. Where do you watch news?
19. How often do you use digital / social media? What device did you use it on most frequently during the last 48 hours?
20. What are the top three things that you can remember, that you like to talk about with your friends' network on social media?

Section 5: conclusion

21. Anything that you would personally want to add? Any other personal experiences that you can think of relevant to this conversation?

POST-INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

To investigate the relationship between gender roles and stereotypes, and advertisements in a Pakistani context, eighteen consumers and advertising practitioners from Pakistan were interviewed in depth, for a minimum of 40 minutes and a maximum of 1 hour 45 minutes. All respondents had peculiar opinions about the questions posed in the four sections of the interview discussion guide. All responses were taken down. After every interview, themes that stood out most consistently throughout the conversation were listed for each respondent. The most common themes and patterns have been explained in further detail in the findings section.

CHAPTER 4: *FINDINGS*

The fundamental roots of Pakistan and its creation, as referenced in the literature review, define the present state and realities of Pakistani culture and society. Pakistan's creation in 1947 and its partition from India (then-sub-continent) was a result of an incongruence in socio-cultural interests and religious practices of Indian Hindus and Muslims. Nadeem (2014) also presents the argument on how these differences only started surfacing during British rule in India. On that backdrop, some cultural values have been integral to this geographic region, which have adapted at a rapid rate to the changing, now-globalized world. The past decade especially has catalyzed the rate of this change hence the focus of the thesis.

The interview guideline sets the stage by asking the respondents for a big picture perspective on cultural values that they have grown up with in Pakistan. Questions under this umbrella make up the first section of the interviews, and a few major themes stood out prominently in most of the interviews:

CULTURAL VALUES OF THE PAKISTANI SOCIETY

Respect as a fundamental cultural block

Regardless of gender, respect in social interactions was identified as a key cultural value. A majority of both consumers and practitioners mentioned respect right in the beginning of the conversation, which indicates its importance in the society. The idea of respect is widespread. Upon probing, respect for the elderly and women in particular were distinct concepts that many respondents identified. One respondent tied the concept of respect with gender roles very distinctively:

“I have studied in liberal schools and even though I was spending a lot of time with the opposite gender, the boundaries were set for a reason and dressing modestly comes with it. You give respect and you earn respect.” (27 years, female practitioner, marketing & communications manager)

Another respondent ties the value of respect in a global construct that applies just as much to the Pakistani society.

“First and foremost, it is respect. It’s pretty much the same everywhere in the world I think, that you have to respect everyone irrespective of their age and color, and that’s what we have been taught as a basic cultural value.” (25 years, female consumer, architect)

To elicit the context further, a respondent referred to an example from his childhood. It depicts the extent of which respect and especially respecting people older to you is an integral part of culture and values that parents raise their children with to this day.

"There was a guy who used to sell samosas, and after a certain time, his business went down and he stopped making samosas. My grandmother gave him a cart that he would leave at the door every evening after using it. I was probably 10 years old and I was supposed to call him brother and not use his profession as a way to refer to him. That is a way of showing respect too." (32 years, male consumer, marketing professional)

None of the respondents, upon probing or without, disagreed with the value of respect as part of the values' fabric. This value has traditionally had an influence over gender roles, more specifically on the role of women in society and workforce. Out of respect, certain professions were considered "disrespectful" for women solely on the basis of gender, including cinema and advertising. More specific details about this are mentioned under the "research literature on the impact of advertising gender stereotypes" section in the literature review. To include an instance, Pakistan International Airlines was among the pioneer brands that started to bring women to the forefront while integrating the "respect" aspect into the tricky, socially charged balance.

Family networks

The second most important theme that stood out is the interviewed consumers' reference to the closely-knit family networks. During the interviews, it was mentioned early on that one of the prime distinctions between the eastern and western culture are drawn from the collectivistic nature of families.

"...On the whole, this is how most of us are brought up. We are a closely knitted family network. We don't have old age homes. Most of our families live with each other."
(27 years, female consumer, homemaker)

"We understand the sensitivity of connectedness, to deal with every sort of relationship, which I see more relevant in east than west. We don't run away from family situations, we deal with them head on and deal with them very sensitively." (25 years, male practitioner, art director)

"Family culture is very prominent in our society. I have experienced it personally like eating dinner together and doing everything with consensus. How males are expected to act in a certain way, and women too, even to sit in a certain way, come home on time, etc." (25 years, female practitioner, account manager)

“We have a very strong family network and very strong family values and I think most households practice it, the degrees vary but it is definitely present. Family values are also very important. Emotional connectedness is also very prevalent. We shouldn’t generalize but I see a majority very attached to their family, spouses, jobs, etc. It isn’t like we can just walk away or quit one day. We give it our best and go to the last extent possible to make things work out. We are sensitive to these things and their understanding.” (29 years, female consumer, language teacher)

The flipside to this value, tied more closely to restrictively defined gender roles, is family networks reflecting on individual choices. A New York Times article, also referenced in the literature review, titled ‘Necessity Pushes Pakistani Women into Jobs and Peril’ narrates the story of 22-year old female facing domestic abuse for choosing to work at McDonald’s. The article is over a decade old, and some respondents touched on the sentiment from an adapting cultural values standpoint.

“Definitely conservatism - they are getting an education, studying in medical colleges where 90% of the students are girls, 10% are boys - but when you go into a hospital, you see men working. Women don’t start up a clinic or even teach medicine. This happens because of the mindset and conservatism. And secondly, a lot has to do with security.” (24 years, male consumer, electrical engineer)

Conservatism

Five respondents identified that the quality of being conservative reflects on society not only in terms of defined roles for men and women, but also in terms of education access especially in the rural areas of Pakistan which accounts for a majority of Pakistan's population.

One respondent from the male practitioners' pocket said: *"It's the literacy rate. You don't have access to education everywhere in Pakistan compared to Bangladesh and India who are our neighbors. Apart from that, there is a big crowd who are much more liberal."* (40 years, male practitioner, commercial filmmaking producer)

A parallel to this angle, conservatism was also described as a value of the Pakistani society that enables more respect for women in general.

"Conservative is a word that is used in our society in a certain way - another angle of it is respect for females which is also a conservative belief when you think about it and there shouldn't be a negative connotation for it. There is a lot of respect given in our society to women. We restrict ourselves from doing a lot of morally and socially incorrect things more than many other societies of the world. That itself is conservatism and it is in our roots." (40 years, female practitioner, head of films at a local production house)

Like most cultural constructs, conservatism has several different layers. While it has evolved over the past decades in the wake of globalization, social media and rapidly changing economic and political fronts, some contradictions have carried over and younger practitioners in the industry are taking note of the barriers created for women all the more, which indicates an evolution and change in this value.

“Time restrictions. The way we dress. I personally know people who step into the office and take off their abayas (body-length covered clothing), and I think this forced clothing cannot be justified. Saleswomen and lower SECs face this problem too. Saleswomen are forced to wear tight-fitted clothes to attract people. Our society is right now a big sick in the head. They know for a fact the marketing people that a tight suit would do the job. Nobody wants to be objectified that way. Traveling in public busses for women is an entirely different topic. The moment you walk in, it doesn’t matter if you are wearing indicative clothes or not. A fully-veiled woman would be equally eyed. We are forced to be formal even if we don’t want to. We get a promotion and that is not attributed to the hard work.” (25 years, female practitioner, account manager)

Another respondent quoted a real-world example from a Pakistani context that indicates a change on this front;

“Girls are riding bikes in Pakistan, especially in Karachi which is absolutely new. People are slowly approving of different things like that but men clearly have some trouble

accepting it - they think it is just for men because of the enclosed culture that we have traditionally had.” (27 years, female consumer, videographer)

Social hierarchy

Male domination at the top of the social hierarchy received unanimous agreement from a majority of the respondents. Four male consumers identified imagining women in domestic roles as a defined gender role, whereas two male advertising practitioners pointed out the portrayal of women in domestic roles as a standard stereotype in advertisements.

“Concepts in ads are a reflection of stereotypes as far as I think. For example, Nestle’s insights are always conventional than anything else. Mothers are in a prime role. In the Pakistani culture at least, rarely ads create something new. Ads are taking concepts from the society instead of giving something new to the society. Gender roles are getting more cemented from a stereotypical perspective.” (33 years, male practitioner, creative director)

Male consumers’ sentiment on social hierarchy echoed this practitioner’s deduction. Men continue to believe that providing for the family rests as a primary responsibility with the male counterpart. One respondent noted,

“A man usually earns the bread and butter. It stems from a religious inclination that says men and women were sent into the world with different roles. By choice, I wouldn’t want to stay home and cook while my partner goes out and works. A woman should be given that right to choose whether they come from that school of thought and want to earn for the family, or if they want to engage in a domestic role. Men have the primary responsibility of providing for the family and I believe in it too.” (32 years, male consumer, marketing professional)

For a balance of perspectives, a female consumer and practitioner identifies the omnipresence of social hierarchy in these words,

“Its present everywhere I go. It’s something you can’t take out of the Pakistani society. A girl would be expected to sit a certain way and so would be a guy. Both are strictly defined. We have a very defined role of the ideal woman in our society like speaking politely and not being “loud”. I have a 12 a.m. curfew for coming home myself. We are progressing, but the wrong ways outweigh the right ways and we are not ready to work on this.” (25 years, female practitioner, account manager)

Rai Shakil Akhtar, author of the book ‘Media, Religion and Politics in Pakistan’, referenced a study in his book which is also referenced in the literature review. Particularly relevant to gender roles, a study on religion, media and politics in Pakistan is included in the book which presents the views of religious scholars on women’s rights to participate in

the economy and be part of the workforce. While the prior statement was aligned with religious directives in views of the scholars, the latter was shunned. Another contradiction overshadowed women's right to vote versus being able to contest for electoral candidacy. In light of this contradictory conservatism professed by male-concentrated religious bodies, the next theme in the interviews conducted for this thesis present consumers' and primarily, Pakistanis' views on the subject.

These contradictions on one hand have given way to collective frustration, especially among women. One female respondent however had a refreshing perspective;

“Negativity is not part of any culture. That is part of the frustration on many different levels. Cultural knit is very strong in our society. Negativity has other reasons sources, it is never rooted in culture. I don't believe in hierarchies. For me, I think social hierarchy doesn't exist and I don't think it should exist.” (28 years, female practitioner, freelance art director)

“It is a good change obviously I think. Take it this way: you get to learn about everything or every aspect yourself be it for men or women. Men are helping out women and helping them. This becomes a more understanding relationship. The relationship becomes more balanced. The other person always had to compromise if one of them was bossy.” (27 years, female consumer, videographer)

Religious values and gender roles

A significant attribution of religious values being integrated into society was toward the religious scholars and leaders in the country in lieu of extremist gender roles' implementation. None of the respondents regarded religion as a non-contributor toward defining gender roles in the Pakistani society. A diverse set of perspectives and opinions were quoted regarding this theme. Some key pointers to note are reflected in the respondents' quotations below:

“Religiously, the way women dress is a major factor. If you are very religious, you dress according to your religion. You cover your head and cover yourself and that, the society accepts. But even if women wear formal business attires like button down shirts and blazers, people don't accept that generally.” (25 years, female consumer, architect)

Naqvi and Riaz (2015), also referenced in the literature review, present a study of radicalization in the Southern Punjab, Pakistan. Primarily, female peacebuilding activists in the study hint at misuse of religion to restrict their initiatives for increasing women's representation in peacebuilding roles and governmental affairs. While consumers agree on complying with religious boundaries in moderation, and that applies to advertisements in their opinion as a component of society, the misuse has also resulted in widening the gender gap instead of bridging it for bettering the economy. Some male consumers who were interviewed for the thesis noted,

“Religion is in our roots. It impacts, shadows everything. It is also very messed up. It effects and impacts everything negatively these days. Ads are affected as well. Lingerie ads for example won’t work in Pakistan. It is frowned upon. Sex education cannot be done in ads. Even though there should be campaigns about it running on television to increase awareness, religious values serve as a barrier to it.” (25 years, male consumer, managing his family business)

“The ‘mullahs’ are implementing religious values but the liberals are not. That group of liberals will never come out and work for it. I don’t know the exact stats but I think the ‘mullah’ pocket is more dominating in Pakistan so I reckon the more conservative side of people are more in numbers. Cities that are metro and big behave differently and people in cities are perfectly comfortable with moderately practicing religious values as part of the everyday life.” (40 years, male practitioner, commercial filmmaking producer)

Conclusively, the impact of religious values trickling down to the individual level greatly varies depending on the geographic location (rural versus urban areas) and religious beliefs (‘mullahs’ versus liberals). What can be drawn from these excerpts is the fact that religious values affect multiple aspects of society including gender roles. No respondent disputed the idea of their impact on the Pakistani society. The literature review provides further context to this rooted impact of religion on social constructs.

SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES OBSERVED IN THE PAST DECADE

The purpose of this thesis fundamentally is to investigate whether or not consumers and advertising practitioners in Pakistan think that the society has undergone significant cultural and gender-role specific changes. Keeping that focus on the forefront in the second section of the interview guidelines, the following themes stood out prominently in the respondents' self-reported opinions during the interviews:

Global awareness

Access to technology, television and the advent of social media have collectively boosted the level of awareness that people have had over the past decade. One respondent stated,

“In the last 10 years our society has evolved more than it did in the last 40 years. Social media is playing a big role. The changes happening are revolutionary, not even evolutionary.” (40 years, male practitioner, commercial filmmaking producer)

The distinction between these changes occurring in metropolitan cities versus rural areas still observes an evident social gap. One respondent noted,

“We have become aware of the world around us. In Sindh, Baluchistan, and NWFP (provinces of Pakistan), you don't see much of a difference in those rural areas. There have

been slight changes, but they aren't very significant. Urban centers yes have evolved a lot and that has had an impact but when compared to the rural side, there is still a wide gap."

(24 years, male consumer, electrical engineer)

The way media and information are consumed has also been revolutionized through social media. Traditionally, news channels on television were considered the primary source of information and staying up to date with the world. That aspect has adapted to the globalized world rapidly. One respondent reflected on her online behavior and said,

"I have joined two to three different Facebook pages where people start conversations, that is the opinion of common people like you and me - that is not influenced by irrelevant power authorities so for me, I would rather go to these different groups." (27 years, female practitioner, marketing & communications manager)

Evolution of gender roles

Personal experiences seemed to inform the concept of gender roles extensively. Most of the respondents reminisced about an experience to base their opinions. While a 25-year old architect is skeptical about the acceptance of women's professional success being attributed to their skill set and not their gender, the 40-year old spearhead of a local

film production house thinks the acceptability of working women has significantly improved.

“I think that if a woman gets to work and climbs up the ladder, she is questioned. People pose questions on that woman and ask her to justify her success. But everyone isn’t like that, people have some level of awareness and congratulate women around her when they achieve something. But in the case of men, there are never any questions - people think it is well deserved. This difference definitely exists.” (28 years, female practitioner, art director)

“I see a lot of females coming forward. Lower or higher socio-economic class doesn’t matter that much anymore. Women are working whether or not they are educated. Salon culture in Pakistan is on the boom, as an example of it. I have seen the society change in terms of their attitude toward women. My first job was in 1999. Now we are sitting at 2018. Media and advertising at that time were not considered respectable workplaces for Pakistani women. I heard things like ‘you’ll become a model, your character will suffer’. There was a lot of resistance. Over a period of time I have seen that change. Particularly in advertising, women in corporate organizations and agencies have driven that change. Girls are even more successful I can surely say.” (40 years, female practitioner, head of films at a local production house)

Another female consumer / respondent echoed the same sentiment, *“It has changed. Women are coming to forefront now. People have a lot of issues with it, women are in leadership roles. Women are handling the house and outdoor chores, everything is being done by women by themselves. I have also seen some men supporting that. They believe in equal contribution.”* (27 years, female consumer, videographer)

A male consumer stated that women are being given equal opportunities now compared to the previous decade and women aren’t being kept from utilizing any opportunities. He said,

“Women are being given chances. It is not like they are being kept from it. Women cab drivers exist in Pakistan. Considering the number of women who want to work, it is adequate.” (32 years, male consumer, marketing professional)

Social hierarchy also has a connection rooted in religion. The religious scholars are mostly men, rarely ever leaving room for a perspective on religion and its directives coming from a woman. This male domination has also given way to domestic violence being masked as religiously permissible, which has been a social issue raised by several women in leadership roles in Pakistan. A legal bill issued in 2017 ironically allowed men to “lightly beat their wives” – a severe humanitarian issue that attracted a lot of attention and debate nationally and internationally. Upon probing, a female practitioner shared her opinion,

“People hitting their wives or daughters is definitely an issue. But domestic violence is not the norm or an acceptable action in our society. Culturally we are not the nation that hits their women. UK, India, etc. Everyone has this issue. The portrayal of the issue, especially in our society, is not accurate. Our family and societal norms are about respect instead. I personally believe negativity cannot be any country’s culture.” (40 years, female practitioner, head of films at a local production house)

From the interviews in general and these excerpts in particular, it can be concluded that the level of acceptance for women’s representation in the workforce has increased significantly. However, barriers to achieving gender equality persist; the literacy rate, economic fluctuations between metro cities and rural areas, and religious values are among the main factors contributing to this gap according to the consumers and advertising practitioners interviewed for this thesis.

THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORKFORCE

Growth opportunities for working women

All the respondents unanimously agreed to the importance of women’s representation in the Pakistani workforce, recognizing the societal and cultural constructs around the idea but grounding their responses more in the changing cultural values.

“In the past, it has been sidelined or shadowed, but there has been a major shift because you see women working even in government departments. From a personal experience, a female officer interviewed me during my driving license renewal, it was good to see that. I didn’t expect that.” (24 years, male consumer, electrical engineer)

Referring to the literature review for basis of this theme, Grunenfelder’s (2013) study is pertinent here. She outlines three key themes in her study: women’s representation in the workforce bettering the national economy, women historically seen as a danger to the religious-national identity if included in the workforce and the minimal representation of women in the workforce at the time. Aspects of that gender gap and barriers for women continue to exist as cultural values and beliefs of a society almost never completely revolutionize themselves, but certain practices, attitudes and perceptions surrounding the values evolve with the changing world. A female respondent draws from her personal experiences and mentioned during her interview,

“Like I said, a lot of the top management positions are given to men, people believe they are more capable of handling things and the woman will eventually get married and stop working. Department heads need to be someone who will stick around and women getting married early in life and they are not given those opportunities.” (27 years, female practitioner, marketing & communications manager)

A male respondent echoed that sentiment in response to one of the questions;

“Given that we are such a male dominated society, in the technical and engineering industries, women face a lot of barriers. In any corporate sector, women are being preferred and they are dominating those areas. In the pharmaceuticals’ business, women are surpassing men. But more industries are male dominated. Political parties are one such example. NGOs however are being run by women. You can see a lot of diversity.” (40 years, male consumer, marketing manager at an industrial firm)

Conclusively, the collective level of acceptance toward women in a variety of professional fields seems to be increasing. Religious values, societal conservatism and defined gender roles that have traditionally restricted women in the confines of a household are gradually becoming more flexible. However, the pace of establishing their leadership needs support from not only their families but also their professional peers. A female respondent voices her aspirations in light of her concerns regarding the social constructs of the Pakistani culture,

“Five years down the line, I would want to be a senior position holder and I have a lot to contribute and I want an opportunity to prove myself. So that I am given a chance to prove myself. So that I can take charge of the department.” (27 years, female practitioner, marketing & communications manager)

“I just feel that we should be more grateful as people. We are living in a much better time and hope for a better future. Things have been much worse than in the past. Women used to be considered as teachers or tailors at most. But now in almost every sector and industry, from being engineers to anything absolutely, women are found. We should be grateful how the society has changed and become more accepting toward women. We have progressed as a nation. Middle class families never considered letting a girl work and now it is completely acceptable. We have come a long way, I work myself. All the people attached to you will be affected by your choices. Track, approach and intentions should be good and everything else works out.” (29 years, female consumer, language teacher)

Barriers for women in the workforce

Most of the female respondents noted that men cause the biggest barriers for females who want to build a professional life or careers for themselves. Some female respondents also recognized that men are also the biggest supporters in some cases and found the idea highly subjective. As an interesting contrast, two male respondents identified as being highly supportive of their female counterparts' career development.

“Men are the barrier. Simple. But again, there are always two sides. Females are there in good numbers who want their own name. There are families where men have

restricted these women. It is always a choice between their marriage and their work for women. Biggest supporters though are also men. Females themselves are very empowered now.” (27 years, female consumer, homemaker)

An anecdotal perspective came up during another interview with a male respondent who is also a practitioner in the production industry,

“There are a lot of women who feel that they want to do something, but they fall back. Nobody is stopping them, but they are not going the distance because nobody is there to find them or provide a platform to these women.” (40 years, male practitioner, commercial filmmaking producer)

Another practitioner integrated his own actions and attitude toward his professional scriptwriter-significant other and emphasized the idea of ‘change starts from within’.

“My wife is a scriptwriter in Geo Television. I have also grown up in the same society where my mother was always in the kitchen and my father used to work. I should now be able to give the same level of importance to my wife’s presentations and work as I do to my own.” (33 years, male practitioner, creative director)

The barriers however, continue to persist. A female advertising practitioner, now a marketing and communications manager at a prominent Pakistani pharmaceutical company put it this way,

“I think it depends on the mindset. For women to work was a big achievement, and people considered how they can let her go out of the house. It was the major consideration. We have crossed the first step a little bit now but there is a long way to go. Women need to be back home by a certain time. As a professional, there are times when you need to travel and go out and get work done - Pakistani society looks down upon these things.”

Another male consumer attributed the socio-economic background of any female as secondary when it comes to women choosing professions and deemed it more relevant and connected to personal preference and comfort in a working environment.

“What socio-economic background you come from, it may vary. You may worry about your safety or you may not feel comfortable working in an office environment and you might prefer working in a school. The middle-class population however is more flexible about this.” (25 years, male practitioner, senior creative writer)

All told, barriers for women being included in the national workforce continue to persist. While consumers and practitioners collectively agree on common ground like importance of women's representation in the workforce, perspectives differed slightly

more so as per the gender of the respondent and irrespective of their profession. Males tend to agree that women have opportunities at their disposal, and while barriers exist to their progress and increased representation, the society needs to put in more effort into accepting it as a fundamental block of developing the country's economy and evolving the culture in a globalized world. Women agree more so about having made strides in their respective fields despite the challenges and barriers that they face, often in the name of religion and conservatism. Women depict a more optimistic attitude and believe they have already made strides in overcoming societal barriers and building their professional stature, whereas men seem to acknowledge the barriers while agreeing that women's representation will take a longer while to be sufficient and adequate on a national level.

COMPARISON BETWEEN CONSUMERS' AND PRACTITIONERS' PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER ROLES IN PAKISTAN

This section focuses on similarities and incongruences about gender roles and their portrayal in advertisements as observed in the perspectives of advertising practitioners and consumers from different walks of life. The question to set the stage to observe this aspect was whether or not the respondent thinks ads play a constructive role in the society.

“Surely ads play a role in society. There are two sides of advertising. One is completely commercial where you sell a product and you get the same impact from it. There

is another side which is more inclined toward society. Be it advertising, drama, film - mass accessible platforms have a great impact on the society.” (30 years, female practitioner, strategic planner)

Another practitioner shared his opinion about traditional advertising and its realities relevant to societal constructs;

“Conventional advertising doesn’t have any legs to stand on. You don’t create anything. Everything stands on popular culture. Stereotypical roles are where you pick up things. Sometimes, a lot of campaigns become a mantra. ‘Got Milk’ is one reference that comes to my mind from an international perspective. Conventional advertising doesn’t create a lot. An architect for instance creates something very pure. Advertisements don’t.”
(25 years, male practitioner, senior creative writer)

Another consumer thinks the advertising industry needs a paradigm shift and attributes gender equality as a barrier;

“... but again, there needs to be a shift in perspective, I still feel a lot of ads still show women as homemakers, although it is changing but the man is still there outside while there comes a point when the woman is taken back into the household. It all needs to change and we need to show that a man has an equal part to play.” (27 years, female consumer, videographer)

Another professional advertising creative director mentioned relearning research and the need for stronger insights as a way to tackle barriers for creating more impactful advertisements. He said,

“Not every profession needs support to create something new but advertising does. We need insights. We are dependent on a lot of things. We need to learn. We need to research and that is so low on quality and care. Peer pressure influences research so much. You can learn only when you meet someone one on one. When you spend time with them. We don’t get to learn properly at all. Only things that are acceptable in society from our own perspective is what we use for work. Stereotypes do sell - that is what makes us kind of helpless because that is the purpose of ads.” (33 years, male practitioner, creative director)

Referring to the informal content analysis described in detail earlier in this thesis, it can be concluded that a paradigm shift in stereotypical representations of gender roles and specifically women is high in demand. While a practitioner deemed women empowerment as a bandwagon every brand wants to jump on, he also mentioned it needs to be done in an authentic and relevant way in its message design strategy, or it is just as easy to fall off the bandwagon if the audience sees through a forced connection for the sake of generating sales and stirring audience’s emotions. The recent examples in product categories that are highly indicative of the state of gender roles’ portrayal in Pakistan

advertising (laundry detergent, clothing, skin lightening products, cooking-related items like spice mixes and cooking oil, among many others) show a subtle shift; however, practitioners and consumers collectively agreed that the society still has a long way to go to break free of religion-induced conservative values due to its misuse that hinder in women's paths of building a career beyond 'homemaking' – the prime stereotype that defines highly restricted gender roles in the society.

On that backdrop and in light of practitioners' views on the role of advertisements in the society, some themes stood out strikingly when responses of practitioners were compared with those of consumers. Those themes are described in further detail below.

Effect of religious values on gender roles and advertisements

Practitioners unanimously agreed that religion has an effect on the way they design messages and garner a strategy for advertising campaigns. This theme remained consistently agreeable for practitioners and consumers. Two consumer respondents didn't acknowledge the effect as a major influencer on how messages are delivered to them through mass media platforms, while most other respondents stated they are aware that religion not only affects it, but that it should be taken into consideration.

One female practitioner acknowledged the effects with a specific example of a product category (condoms) that takes a direct effect in a culturally conservative society.

“Yes, if you think about it. Josh and all these brands of condoms for example. “How would the ‘mullahs’ react to this?” was a question which always came up. Family members are generally sensitive when it comes to religious values. It definitely does affect the kind of communication and the mode of communication as well.” (27 years, female practitioner, marketing & communications manager)

A male consumer agrees that ads are a depiction of societal values and religion is a part of that overall fabric. He attributes ads as a depiction of society and religious practices and doesn’t believe ads create something new in the society or trigger a long-term change.

“I think ads are a depiction of how the society works anyway. As far as gender roles are concerned, they show what’s being practiced in the society. Religion does drive specific ads during different times of the year. Ramadan ads always depict the call to prayer for instance.” (32 years, male consumer, marketing professional)

Another female practitioner recognized the extent to which religious values affect advertisements. She compared a juxtaposed example of a TV actress and used it to explain how this effect is seen on mass media.

“Religious values have a really big role to play, especially during Ramadan. Ayesha Omar, a TV actress, who was just seen a day before in sleeveless outfit dresses up completely differently during Ramadan and people have started seeing through it. Before Shan, a household spice brand, was modernized and featured women, even women’s hand were taken off from creative execution.” (30 years, female practitioner, strategic planner)

The only contradiction, or a different perspective on the subject, was put forward by a female consumer who talked about the effect of religious values invalid in the first place. In her opinion, most religious values are misinterpreted and that religion cannot be a barrier to women’s aspirations and role in the society.

“I don’t agree that religious values have an effect on our society because most of our religious values are misinterpreted in the first place. Religious interpretation is incorrect about Islam, especially here in Pakistan and throughout the world. The Prophet’s wife was a working woman herself, a very successful trader. How can that religion ever become a problem toward a working woman? A woman must always respect herself and that’s most important.” (40 years, female practitioner, head of films at a local production house)

Dedication of women to work on their careers

Female consumers and practitioners very holistically think that women need more representation in the society and national workforce and they should be able to do so without a man's support or hindering.

“In today's culture, you can't go about not working. No matter whether a woman is sewing or cleaning houses, everyone has to work. Women's representation is almost negligible in my opinion. A majority of them are mostly restricted to their households. They are expected to take care of the house and raise children. I don't think that is equal gender representation. Out of 35, only 8 are women in my department at an ad agency. There is a stark contrast.” (25 years, female practitioner, account manager)

Male consumers and practitioners on the other hand share the opinion of women needing added support to be able to pursue a professional career; not necessarily did any of them mention that they are against the notion of women building a life beyond homemaking, but a male practitioner highlighted a critical perspective on women's dedication to professional interests; none of the female respondents echoed this sentiment.

“It has to definitely change. Women will bring a lot of new things in the society. Society will change in a positive way. There is a lot that needs to be done from the female side also. There is a lot of argument on the dedication of women - like females who don't

want to work but have to work. Guys do it more so - they dedicate more time, head of the family and running the show.” (40 years, male practitioner, commercial filmmaking producer)

On this backdrop of consumers’ values, beliefs and perceptions of advertisements, the next chapter outlines conclusions and findings. Answers for the research questions posed earlier in the thesis will facilitate focusing on the relationship between gender roles and stereotypes, and advertisements from the perspective of Pakistani consumers and practitioners (who are consumers themselves) in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: *DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY*

DISCUSSION

To answer the research questions outlined in the introductory chapter, conclusions were drawn from the themes garnered in the post-interview analysis. Once all interviews were completed, individual themes were grouped into overarching themes and each theme was evaluated for whether it stood out consistently across all respondent groups. If there were inconsistencies in how respondents shared their opinions about these overarching themes, gender, age and profession were looked at to elicit the reasons behind the differences. Some differences were naturally observed, which are described in the previous chapter and below specific to the research questions.

A country of its own kind, created in the name of religious values and way of life for Muslims and partitioned from the sub-continent in 1947, women's rights and representation in Pakistan aligned with religion compared to the extent to which they are acceptable in western democracies have been consistently debated in literature, society and politics. Islamic guidelines on women's social decorum like *purdah*, as explained earlier in the literature review, have consistently influenced mass media fronts including advertising. The proclamation of religious rules and their implementation by male religious scholars, or the *mullahs*, continue to influence all aspects of society including mass media

to this day. Rai Shakil Akhtar, author of the book ‘Media, Religion and Politics in Pakistan’, published in 2000 by Oxford University Press, references a study that was conducted about media, religion and politics in Pakistan, finding stark contradictions in responses of 50 such religious scholars, where 62% respondents agreed on women’s right to vote, and 69% of the same sample believed that women should not contest for electoral candidacy. Grunenfelder (2013) found three key patterns defining Pakistani women’s representation in the workforce: 1) women’s work contributing to national development, 2) women’s representation in workforce is a danger to the nation and lastly, 3) women’s representation in the workforce as nonexistent. Considering these three themes and how she grounds them in socio-political and historic contexts in Pakistan, it is clear that gender roles are intensively affected by women’s representation in the workforce. The inclusion of this concept in the discussion guide is used to interview consumers and advertising practitioners in this research study.

Because the research methodology was strictly qualitative in nature, these responses were grouped on subjective judgement. Consistency in the criteria of grouping responses under overarching themes was maintained to the maximum extent possible and eliminating all possible personal biases.

Three different aspects of one broader research question guide the conclusive findings of this thesis. The main research question focuses on the relationship between advertising and gender roles and stereotypes. This question has a background set in the

historic creation of Pakistan, religious values, political reforms and cultural artefacts from the subcontinent and undivided India that the new state was born with in 1947. Specific conclusions from the in-depth interviews are outlined below under each research question.

Does advertising influence gender roles in Pakistan?

A collective outlook on the literature review and in-depth interviews of both advertising practitioners and consumers from Pakistan reflect three main components that defined the primal state of gender roles in Pakistan: the history of Pakistan's creation, socio-political developments in 1947, and religious values.

From the interviews of both practitioners and consumers, it was evident that gender roles are reflected in advertising as they are being practiced in the society in their opinions. However, a majority of the respondents agreed that there is an increasing need for progress and people-facing representation of women in Pakistan. They agreed that ads should reflect constructs and concepts that help the society and culture progress in a globally aware direction, and gender roles are part of that narrative.

It is also a nuanced observation that stands out in these interviews that women consider religion as the least of a barrier when it comes to building a professional identity in addition to their role in the household. On the other hand, men view religion and society as reasons why women would potentially be restricted to traditional gender roles that confine them. Pakistan Advertising Association's survey is referenced in an article from

2016, finding that 75% of all advertisements analyzed in the study feature women in products' ads that are to be used in the kitchen of the bathroom, and 56% women were shown in domestic roles. Connecting the many layers of advertising and reflection of gender roles in them, with religious values, brings out a complex social landscape. In consumers' point of view, while gender roles have evolved beyond severe restriction historically, advertising reflects their current state as being practiced in the society and that women's representation in the workforce is the primary avenue to achieve more liberal and rightful representation of women in the Pakistani society.

a. What are the factors that define gender roles and stereotypes in the Pakistani society?

Considering the historical perspectives on gender roles from a socio-political standpoint, further substantiated by the responses of participants in this research study, three factors seem to be influencing gender roles most prominently in the Pakistani society: (1) religious values related with gender, (2) male domination in most aspects of society and power, and (3) acceptance and encouragement of women's representation in the national workforce across socio-economic groups. These factors and their influence on shaping gender roles is further described below pertaining to rest of the research questions.

b. Can gender roles be modified or re-framed through advertising in Pakistan?

Both practitioners and consumers do believe that the past decade particularly marked significant progress toward less restrictive gender roles in the society and breaking gender stereotypes. Without a distinction between consumers' and practitioners' sentiments, they attribute a considerable part of this progress to the advent and penetration of social media.

Practitioners believe that while it is rare that advertising creates something new in the culture, there is an increased need for brands to take a point of view now more than ever. Consumers on the other hand agreed that their perception of gender roles has become more flexible with the changing times and that it is perceived as morally undesirable to restrict a woman to the confines of home, at least in the metropolitan cities. However, consumers did not attribute this trend to advertising majorly.

c. Do consumers agree that advertising has reframed their perception of gender roles?

Consumers irrespective of gender agreed that gender roles have evolved significantly beyond their restrictive nature in the past decade. However, they did not attribute it to advertising in specific. A majority of consumers quoted various recent examples of advertisements that reflected this evolution, especially concepts of women empowerment and more contribution from men within households. This indicates that

consumers detect evolving gender roles as they are reflected in ads. However, they do not believe that advertisements in Pakistan have created a new gender roles' concept that the society has adopted yet. A majority of the consumers stated that they expect ads to be more socially impactful and dispel meaningful messages into the culture.

d. What do advertising practitioners believe their role to be in this reframing process?

A creative director mentioned the lack of availability of research and data in Pakistan. He also referred to the limited extent to which the numeric data, lacking in qualitative context, can be relied on. Another practitioner mentioned how creating something is rarely ever a function that advertising plays in the society and that it is more of a reflection of the society and culture. An account planner specifically attributed mass media and its impact to be a key change driver in any given society, especially one like Pakistan where literacy rates are staggeringly low.

A creative director stated that advertising as a profession needs new and forward-thinking insights to feed change to the society and culture. How every profession may not need this aspect of social science also stands true in his opinion, but advertising specifically stands on insights and organic thought leadership is imperative to impactful advertising. He also expressed the sentiment of helplessness because stereotypes continue to sell in the society.

Collectively, practitioners express a sentiment of lacking resources in terms of credible research to base insights on, and that considering the impact of mass media in the Pakistani society, this is even more imperative. They acknowledge and emphasize the ideal role that ads should play in the society, and highlight cultural integration being a critical missing value from the advertising scene. Stereotypes continue to be reflected in ads, which also translates into sales as a majority of the population identifies with these stereotypes hence the society and culture have a long way to go to achieve mitigation of most gender stereotypes. Gender roles on the other hand are holistically perceived more flexibly, which practitioners look at optimistically to develop future work.

SOCIAL DESIRABILITY

Even though all the participants were recruited on personal-reference basis, socially desirable responses cannot be considered completely eliminated. Being objective about the fact that the interviewer or moderator was a female, it would be safe to assume that without consciously thinking about it or voicing it, respondents, especially male, may have shaped their answers and opinions per the situation. To address this potential bias, respondents were reminded at intervals during the interview that any of their responses do not have to comply with any social acceptability standards, and that their responses should solely be based on personal opinions and point of view. In the beginning of the interview, respondents were also given a rundown of the purpose of the research and that their responses will not be used as basis for any sort of judgement. Social desirability,

even though efforts have been made to mitigate it to the most possible extent, should be kept in mind while reading the verbatim especially from male participants.

LIMITATIONS

Multiple factors can be considered as limitations to this thesis and its conclusions. Physical distance from the respondents is the most noteworthy factor - all respondents were interviewed over a remote phone call via the internet, and their responses and the entire discussion was recorded for future reference with the consent of the respondents. One respondent refused to be recorded, and his consent was complied with. In-person discussions or interviews could have resulted in richer conclusions, which could not be achieved in this thesis. Non-verbal communication and facial expressions could have been probed more if these discussions or in-depth interviews were conducted in person.

Another limitation was the scarcity of scholarly data and research on the subject applicable to a Pakistani context. Few researchers, professors and graduate students from Pakistan have studied this subject closely or published research on it in internationally credible journals. While this validated the need for research in this area, it also presented a set of challenges. It was difficult to ground the research questions and general observations in published research. To overcome this limitation, books written by advertising veterans

and mass communication experts, and industry professionals' published reviews were referenced.

Due to the interviews being conducted remotely, and following a timeline concurrent with other academic responsibilities, the sample sizes are not very exhaustive. Future research in this area will have better flexibility for generalization if the more participants can be recruited especially if the methodology is qualitative.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should look into other understudied aspects of mass communication in addition to advertising including drama, film, journalistic practices and visual communication. Whether culture is deeply influenced by these aspects or merely reflected in them, the relationship between different forms of mass communication and cultural and societal constructs is essential from both a scholarly and practitioner's perspective.

Another implication for future research directions is looking at the extent to which brands believe it is their responsibility to develop culture in a progressive and globally aware manner. This can also be compared to what extent consumers in Pakistan believe brands are actually doing so at a given time. One lens to look at this area through is considering brands in the study that are deeply rooted in the Pakistani culture, or that utilize

aspects of culture in their communication consistently. Some examples that come to mind are Coca Cola and Pepsi that consistently integrate cricket in their communication, knowing that the sport is inherent to the Pakistani culture. Another aspect could be looking at food brands during religiously or culturally charged times of year like Ramadan and religious festivities versus global festive concepts like new year and comparing how the level of influence and consumer perception of it varies.

Aside from advertising and culture related implications, future research could tie other social concepts and ideas with mass communication and look at the combination from a research orientation. For instance, looking at the literacy rate and changes in it with the advent of social media and smartphones.

A vital area of future research is considering implications of gender roles in advertising in other Muslim countries. Advertising a women's beauty contest in Saudi Arabia was a juxtaposed challenge, considering Arab women are not featured in their mass communications openly or at least not without *hijab*. This was addressed by the women's beauty brand, Olay, in a campaign asking the audience to vote for 'the most beautiful eyes of Arabia', since that is the only part of the face that is widely, acceptably and permissibly uncovered and without clothing at any given time or part of society. Nike's campaign 'What will they say about you?' released in the middle east in February 2017 received considerable controversy from Muslim-majority conservative countries like the Saudi Arabia, but women and people in general in more liberal-minded countries like the United

Arab Emirates welcomes the school of thought where *hijabi* women are taking on non-stereotypical everyday activities like skating, painting, or playing sport. Indonesian advertising has some examples that typically would have included women, like a women's cologne ad featuring cats instead. Looking deeper into gender roles and their portrayal in Muslim majority countries like these is a primary implication for future research in this area.

A wide variety of social issues are untapped in the Pakistani literature and scholarly publications. While STEM, economics and business may be field that have considerably larger amounts of research that investigates issues and academic implications, social sciences are extremely understudied, and demand attention and contribution from practitioners, professors and scholars alike. It is imperative that future research should look deeper into dimensions of social science and mass communication, some of which have been suggested above, for the economy and societal progress to be informed by scholarly work in Pakistan.

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW VERBATIM

CULTURAL VALUES

“First foremost, it is respect. It’s pretty much the same everywhere in the world I think, that you have to respect everyone irrespective of their age and color, and that’s what we have been taught as a basic cultural value. Coming from my school, Mama Parsi trains us to have our own set of opinions irrespective of how society may judge us. You have your own opinions, but you should also know how to practice them wisely. People usually don’t know but they are more aware.

“Everybody has a lot of opinions for you but it always depends how you convey those things to a new person and I think we are groomed (me) who are trained to do so, not exactly all young people but I credit most of it to my school.” (24 years, female consumer, architect)

“To nail down a few points, for culture I would say we are expected to act in a certain way. We have an Indo-Pak influence and we have western influence as well so it is a mixture. Language is a very important thing. Influence of the western society, people have a pressure of speaking in English. That has caused the descent of the Urdu language. Gradually, the culture is evolving. From a conservative society, we are evolving into a

progressive. I don't know if that's a good or bad thing, but I do think that some root values shouldn't be lost.

There was this culture of being really close to our neighbors. That isn't there anymore. We had a pretty strict curfew time. Clothing had a major role to play. With the CPEC going, the Chinese culture is mingling into ours, you don't expect people to do any certain thing there in Dolmen mall for example. They would go around however they want so parts of culture are evolving. I don't think there is any difference left between a western city and Karachi at this point. The language bit - I have seen that parents want their children to learn their language, but I didn't face that. My parents are very liberal, they don't restrict anything, but there are still people who would object. Food also comes in as part of culture, there are so many multi-ethnic restaurants. Sushi is coming in heavy, five years ago I wouldn't have known what is Sushi. People want to try out new food.” (25 years, female practitioner, account manager)

“We understand the sensitivity of connectedness, to deal with every sort of relationship, which I see more relevant in east than west. We don't run away from family situations, we deal with them head on and deal with them very sensitively.

“I think a kind of a paranoia is also part of us. Our risk management is really high. We don't have a carefree attitude. That too describes us. These are things that describe

most Pakistani families. I don't think this will be a 100% accurate. These are things that are taught in an average family. But the degrees obviously vary - I think there are extremes to it, we are talking about it in a moderate positioning here. You don't have any opinion unless you have the authority for it in one place - and gender roles come here as well. Man is always given more importance, and a woman is told to stay silent. On the other hand, gender doesn't matter, and everyone is given an equal place and rights. And then in some parts of society, they "allow" their daughter a good education and career and life, but they also keep an eye on her. They operate in moderation. The liberal extremism lets girls loose and they don't care about what the child or girl does. I think these three grades describe us." (45 years, female practitioner, production lead at a local TV channel)

"Things have definitely changed. People have become more liberal. People have expanded their exposure. People have gone out of the country and studied, and they have built lives outside. They have added more exposure and travel to their lives. They are traveling. They are not just doing a 9 to 5 job anymore. They have discovered a lot more stuff to live with it. Whoever has the opportunity, people are practicing privilege more. Pakistan has a lot of things that we didn't have before: malls, international brands coming in, people have more resources which people are using wisely and quite a lot. As a third world country, we are progressing definitely, and in the past decade or so, we have come a long way for sure. The law and order situation, infrastructure wise we are far behind but yeah, we are making way but at own pace." (29 years, female consumer, language teacher)

“As I said, through social media and smartphone, people are closer to what the world is up to. This platform has been used for various purposes and this has been a major influence on everybody’s life. People who are responsible, who are using this platform to voice their opinions, I think they have a huge responsibility, and that can influence anybody’s mind. They are going to remember this, whoever is exposed to it. People relate to social media a lot. I believe there should be a filtering process. Not everyone and anyone can voice their opinions openly and responsibly. Many people are not using it responsibly.” (24 years, female consumer, architect)

MASS-MEDIA AND AD SPECIFIC VERBATIM

“Just see how Pakistani dramas are changing: “Zindagi Gulzar Hai” and “Ek Thi Marium”, “Humsafar” even, these shows portray two different sides of a woman’s role. Two of these shows portray women with a level of weakness, women need to go back to the person who once disowned her. And the other show, showed a woman who built herself, she would rant in her diary but on the outside she was very confident.

“So our media still shows women in the same stereotypical role. First people want to see that a woman is weak and then she rises up to the occasion. Why show her weak in the first place?”

“Gul Ahmed’s Mai Perfect Hoon comes to mind which completely addresses this issue and all this comes together online, which again I would say is such a big change. Other ads also show women just as eye candy in case of selling a bike, in case of a milk commercial, a woman is shown dancing to sell something.” (24 years, female consumer, architect)

“There are many kinds of ads right now. If I see a product, that is only being sold through music and dance and without relevance to the product and its purpose, I am surely not interested. If a story that involves a product, with good aesthetic, the story grabs my attention. It is more about how your grasp my attention, by music and dance that are irrelevant, or do you want to catch my attention through a story? Like only today, Indian ads always have a story about it. That is more relatable than anything else. Tanishq is an indian brand that I watched where a film celebrity is buying jewelry for her sister and herself and there is an emotional storyline to it.” (27 years, female consumer, videographer)

“Another ad has a narration of the wife for a household and it is 2:30 am and the husband has just come home, he closes the door without making noise, put the keys behind

the counter, take out the cooked vegetables, and put it into the microwave, will come to put a blanket on me, and he cares about my sleep so I should also care about his wish for a hot crisp chapati. This entire story was for a hot pot for chapatis and I am able to remember everything. That to me is very catchy. Day to day life relatability is more useful than a model selling something while dancing on the screen.” (45 years, female practitioner, production lead at a local TV channel)

“People should be more responsible who are making ads. We talked about content and how it should be catchy and more importantly inspiring, people will benefit from it. If you are selling something and if your ad brings inspiration and motivation to people, and if it is not just about you and your product, I think people should realize the sensitivity as well. It needs to be a little more than that. If you make the product more relevant and relatable, only then it does play any role in society.” (25 years, male consumer, runs the family business)

“Gul Ahmed featured all kinds of women, Generations ran a TV spot as well, and they are featuring transgender people and every religion, caste, color and they are telling their story. These clothes made them connected with the society. Ideas by Gul Ahmed did the same thing - featured a model with darker skin and made it own-able because that is a taboo in Pakistani society. It talked about empowering women - no matter how I look, what I wear, what I do, people shouldn't judge me.” (30 years, female practitioner, strategic planner)

“A lot of our economy rests with agriculture so those ads are definitely something to point out here. Kenwood’s ad where Ayesha Khan is the wife also come to mind. Zameen.pk’s ad with Fawad Khan is also a great example that I can remember who buys a house for his parents.” (25 years, male practitioner, graphic designer)

“Tolerance is missing altogether I think. There are people who completely against women being educated or having a career so I think that needs to come back. Tolerance for people’s views and wishes is missing. This is missing from our society as well and it is reflected in ads as well. Take a real life example if ads and use that as a source of content. Tolerance will come with it in ads.” (30 years, female practitioner, strategic planner)

“I’m not complaining but in Pakistani context, advertising however we have started losing on that grid. It has become extremely artificial. Forced. There is no thought behind any commercials. Honesty in advertising has decreased. We follow India and international advertising a lot and inspiration sometimes leads to copying thoughts. This is also one reason to stay open and write about what is right. Advertising has a lot of dictatorship now. In the name of insight, mundane facts are being used like that. For example, patriotism is not an insight.” (40 years, female practitioner, lead scriptwriter at a local production house)

“Everything is very production based. Habib Bank Limited’s work is an example - the tagline is so big and open. Insight however has gone missing.” (30 years, female practitioner, strategic planner)

SOCIAL HIERARCHY AND GENDER ROLES IN RESPONDENTS’ OPINIONS

“The picture of a stick figure of a man right on top and all the people branching out of him.

“Gender hierarchy is quite male dominated especially in Pakistan. Men generally in Pakistan is the powerful gender in terms of friends, even in terms of their income.” (27 years, female practitioner, marketing & communications professional)

“From my recent experience: in my office, me and Madiha were the only girls. Our boss would talk to us very politely and even if we mess up, he would be very polite and helpful. If a guy messes up though, our boss would immediately get a little more coarse. People who are well educated tend to think that women deserve a certain level of respect. It is good for me but it’s not good for the opposite gender.

“Gender role is actually a thing for which I have a vegetarian example that I just told you. It is a very simple example. Things are definitely more complex than this.

“I can do whatever I want. I have the privilege to practice all my rights. I am getting married but thankfully the person I am getting married to thinks it is totally up to me. The man thinks he should not have a problem with whatever I want to do with my career.” (24 years, female consumer, architect)

“I don't mind the direction, but we shouldn't stray from our core roots. In five ten years down the road, I fear we won't have an identity of our own. The entire clothing debate has personally affected me. If I go in particular areas of the society, I think it gives me a sense of security. I can't roam around in a pantsuit everywhere even though I accept and wear our traditional dress most of the times.” (25 years, female, advertising practitioner, account manager)

“The society has defined the job of a man and a woman. A child with a young mind will accept everything that the society defines without many questions. Girls are bound by how they should sit or where they should go. Ours is definitely a male dominated society. The VOs in our ads even are male. I asked someone in a focus group, “What if we have a female VO?” Approximately ninety percent respondents preferred a male, macho voiceover. Males are considered above females even by common agreement in my opinion, and I'm not saying that's right.” (32 years, male practitioner, creative director)

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE NATIONAL WORKFORCE

“Let’s say I’m going through a medical problem, I can just go to a certain Facebook page and ask people. All of this has contributed toward getting women out. Now women know who Trump or Nawaz Sharif are. Women are more aware now because they have a form of media in their hands. All these things go hand in hand. If I’m going through a problem in life or in workplace, I would go talk about it on social media and these people together generate connectivity. These people can together implement solutions. The level of awareness and exposure that people have, people have been given a troubleshooting platform. Our society in a way is chauvinistic and again this is not generalizable. But it takes a lot of guts to have a career. This will be given in case of a confident girl. Women will not take any improper behavior anymore in workforce anymore. You’d have a certain number of friends and family members, but media has enabled the whole world to help you with your issues and this has especially given women the confidence to deal with it.” (29 years, female consumer, language teacher)

“Physical limitations exist. We are educated. We are civilized. But not everybody is of that caliber right now. Everyone doesn’t have that level of awareness, education or privilege. Their behaviors and action speak loudly. If something wrong happens, it is a sensitive thing if it happens with a girl, but if something unfortunate happens with a boy it is considered unfortunate and not something beyond that. It becomes a matter of safety for

women. Emotionally I don't see any major barriers.” (45 years, female practitioner, production lead at a local TV channel)

“I always tried to break stereotypes. I would never do that to my own daughter. I wanted to perhaps become an example for people. If you have a will, there is always a way. If you are passionate about your work, then sky is the limit. Women get a lot of respect - but if a female is annoying or even a man, people will disrespect him or her anyway. People will always respect you depending on the way you portray yourself. This is the first thing that I tell a girl when I am interviewing her - think about yourself as an employee. This mindset is there now in Pakistan. Ambition is increasing and has increased.” (40 years, female practitioner, lead scriptwriter at a local production house)

EFFECTS OF RELIGIOUS VALUES ON CULTURE, SOCIETY AND GENDER ROLES

“You will never be taken seriously if you are dressed shabbily. Some women need to cover up because body image is still a conservative taboo, body parts being prominent is not accepted here in Pakistan or even in the religion and I think the way people dress gives an idea of how other people should behave with them.” (27 years, female consumer, videographer)

“No. I think advertising doesn’t have a direct effect. Culturally we don’t accept a few things openly and that is not completely religious. We are not completely discounting feminine appeal. They will never come on screen and start talking negatively about their religion.

“In terms of personal progress, religion has never ever become a problem. We are a very decent, culturally knit family. Religion was also practiced. It was never a barrier in my path. Religion never bugged me. But there were a lot of relatives and society, who started pointing at me.” (30 years, female practitioner, strategic planner)

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